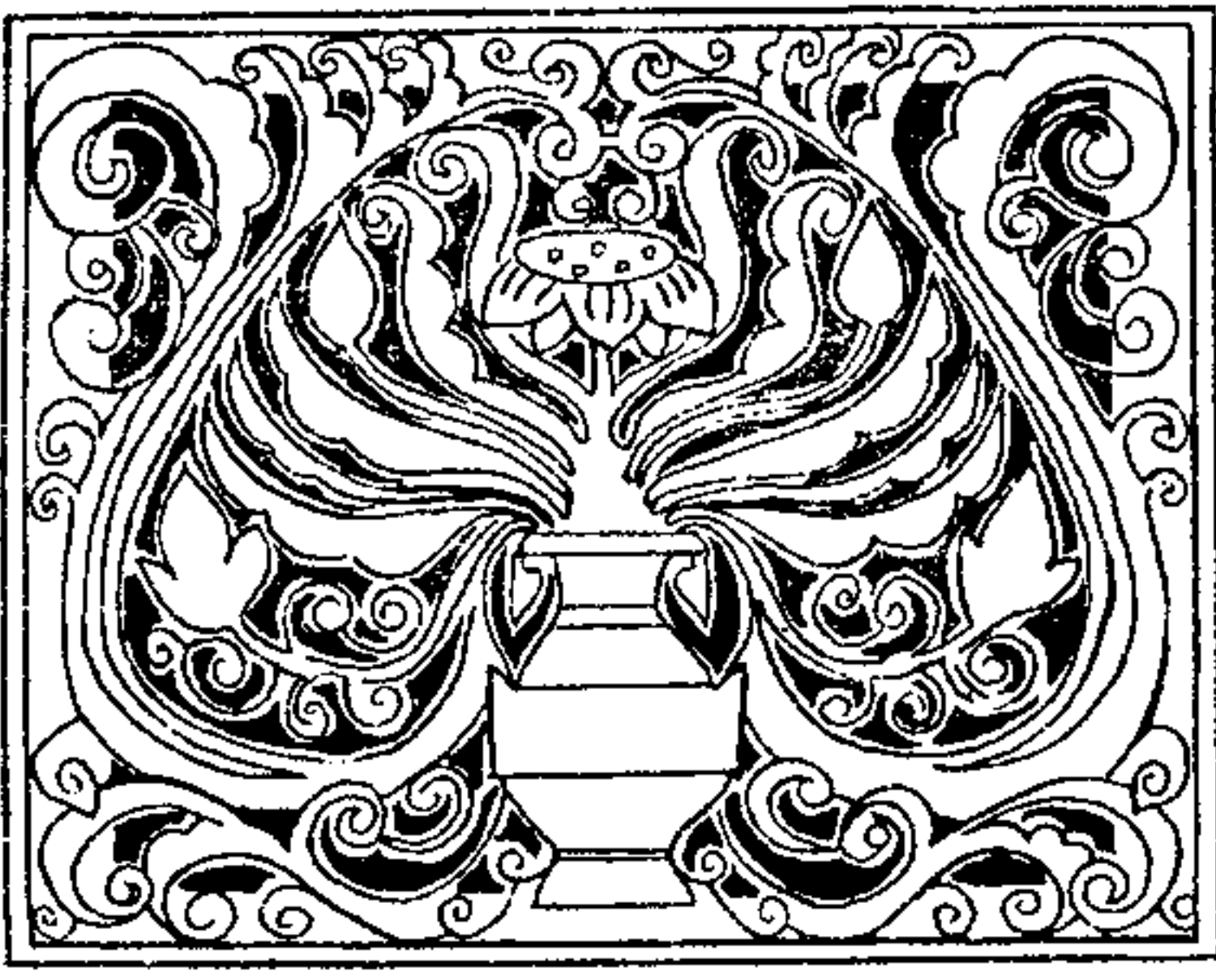




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NOVEMBER 1997

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उत्तिष्ठत
जाग्रत
प्राप्य
वरान्निबोधत



PRABUDDHA BHARATA

ARISE! AWAKE! AND STOP NOT TILL THE GOAL IS REACHED

Vol. 102

NOVEMBER 1997

No. 11

Divine Wisdom

THE BHAGAVAN AS THE ONE GOAL OF ALL ASPIRANTS

(Sage Kapila to his mother Devahūti)

एतावानेव योगेन समग्रेणेह योगिनः।
युज्यतोऽभिमतो ह्यर्थो यदसङ्गस्तु कृत्स्नशः॥

The complete detachment and non-affectedness in the midst of this world manifestation (which such a perception [see previous issue] brings), is the one goal that all spiritual disciplines have in view.

ज्ञानमेकं पराचीनैरिन्द्रियैर्ब्रह्म निर्गुणम्।
अवभात्यर्थरूपेण भ्रान्त्या शब्दादिधर्मिणा॥

यथा महानहरूपस्त्रिवृत्पञ्चविधः स्वराट्।
एकादशविधस्तस्य वपुरण्डं जगद्यतः॥

It is the one Pure Consciousness, called Brahman beyond the *Guṇas* of *Prakṛti*, that is seen by the outward-going senses as various objects and interpreted due to delusion in a distorted way as sound, touch and other

sensations. That same Pure Consciousness has manifested as the *Mahat*, *Ahaṁkāra* (I-sense), its three-fold expressions, the eleven senses, the five elements, and the self-conscious Jiva. They form the Cosmic Shell constituting His body, of which all the worlds are parts.

एतद्वै श्रद्धया भक्त्या योगाभ्यासेन नित्यशः।
समाहितात्मा निःसङ्गो विरक्त्या परिपश्यति॥

This truth is perceived by one who is endowed with *Śraddhā* (faith), *Bhakti* (devotion), an unrelenting practice of spiritual disciplines, self-control, detachment and dispassion.

—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 3.32.27–30

Human Woe - III

We have not yet come across the pathetic plight of the poor. India is a country frequented by calamities which often put an end to the life of many. The cry of despair, of anguish, is unbearable. Yet the masses bear silently, suffer intensely, and as a result pain never poses a great hurdle. It is not new for villages to be swept by floods; for the poor to die of starvation or disease; for earthquakes to shatter homes and bring devastation to villages killing human beings and live stock. Disaster follows disaster; yet the smile is still there, and the enthusiasm to struggle still shines steadily. 'Suffering', 'patient' are apt descriptives for the people of India. This month we are about to come across one such instance that brought into existence the first famine relief activity of the Ramakrishna Mission and the setting up of an orphanage.

There is a touching and revealing incident mentioned in *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* which brings out side by side the fact that in India the poor had practically none to care for them and how this state of affairs touched the tender-hearted Swami Vivekananda:

Swamiji was...in a sort of deep reverie, when Girish Babu suddenly called out to him and said: Well, hear me, please. A good deal of study you have made in the Vedas and Vedanta, but say, did you find anywhere in them any way for us out of all these profound miseries in the country, all this starvation, all these crimes of adultery, and the many horrible sins?

Saying this he painted over and over again the horrid pictures of society.

Swamiji remained perfectly quiet and speechless, while at the thought of the sorrows and miseries of his fellow men, tears began to flow out of his eyes, and seemingly to hide his feelings from us, he rose and left the room.

Meanwhile, addressing the disciple, Girish Babu said: Did you see, Bangal? What a great loving heart! I don't honour your Swamiji simply for being a Pundit versed in the Vedas; but I honour him for that great heart of his which just made him retire weeping at the sorrows of his fellow beings. (CW, vol. 6, p. 500).

Swami Akhandananda who had received his mandate from Swamiji (please see last month's editorial), had now a mission to fulfil and had become ignited by the spirit and words of the leader. He had seen at Jamnagar an example of exemplary service in the person of Bhattji. Akhandanandaji's tender heart became stern and resolute on seeing widespread misery in the creation of a benign Providence. Like unto all, his spirit revolted against such a God. The devotee, the monk in him turned into a warrior, a fighter in the court of God taking up the cause of the miserable and the downtrodden. We have already seen the budding forth of this feeling in his efforts at Khetri. There lay before him experiences which were to bring out the lion in him and start the first relief work and orphanage of the Ramakrishna Mission.

Swami Akhandananda returned to the Math at Alambazar by the end of 1895, after five long years, to attend the birthday celebration of Sri Ramakrishna. In March 1896 the occasion was observed with great solem-

nity at the Math. At this time there was an epidemic of cholera in the locality and Swami Akhandananda attended to the needs of the patients at the risk of his own life.

A great desire to visit the holy places in Bengal took possession of the Swami and he set out on his pilgrimage, first arriving at noon in Khardah to visit the temple of Syamasundara. As the temple was closed, Swami Akhandananda decided to stay overnight. At night the Swami went to the temple to visit the deity, and on returning found that the Mahabharata recital that was going on in the house where he stayed was nearing completion. Significantly, the pundit was reciting, 'Life is as unsteady as a drop of water on a lotus leaf.' It was the last day of the recital and the pundit was ill and totally exhausted.

Before retiring to bed, the master of the house went to see the pundit, and finding him still unwell, sent him some medicines. The patient grew worse during the night and Swami Akhandananda did as much as he could to serve him. Finding that a physician had to be called in, the Swami knocked at the door of the host's room but got no response. At three in the morning, a brahmin widow arrived and took up the nursing and by eight in the morning the pundit expired, practically receiving no medical aid.

After visiting a few more places, Swami Akhandananda returned to the Math. How deep was his spirit of service could be gauged by an incident on a hot summer day in 1896. When the brother disciples had fallen into sleep, Swami Akhandananda began to fan them with a large fan. This caused him no fatigue at all because his vow of service supplied him all the required energy.

In 1897 Swami Vivekananda returned from America to India. He received ovation from the people of India at each place he touched. All at the Math were busy making arrangements for Swamiji's reception. At

last Swamiji came to Calcutta and received very touching addresses. He spoke out his plans for the regeneration of India in many of the places he visited and inspired the youth to dedicate themselves for the cause of the motherland and the *sanatana dharma*. At the splendid address of welcome by the citizens of Calcutta on 28 February 1897, Swamiji reminded the public that India's national ideals are spiritual, that in the present age we have in Sri Ramakrishna that spiritual ideal embodied, and that if the nation must rise, it must enthusiastically rally around his name. Swamiji left for Darjeeling to recoup his health which had become ruined by arduous work both in the West and in India.

Drawn by the will of the Divine, Swami Akhandananda set out again to visit Navadvip, made famous by Sri Gauranga, an Incarnation of God. Swami Akhandananda also visited the hut where Kesav Bharati, the monk who bestowed sannyasa on Sri Gauranga, had lived. He then set out towards Murshidabad, a historical town, and came across many cowherd boys with emaciated bodies. This was the beginning of his contact with the after-effects of famine. With the little cash at his disposal, he distributed a few pice among them.

Wending his way through Kaliganj and Plassey, the Swami reached Daudpur where he came across a Muslim girl weeping over a broken jar, which pitcher was the only one her family had to fetch water in. The Swami bought her another pitcher and some puffed rice to alleviate her hunger, which brought joy to the little one and, definitely, immense delight to the Swami. But then about a dozen famished children surrounded him seeking his help. This is no uncommon sight in India. One can imagine the dejection with which the Swami was compelled to tell the expectant little ones that he had nothing with him to offer to them.

The procedure to bring succour to the door of the needy is always laid with many

red tapes. As it was merely a discharge of duty, a report had to be given by the Deputy Magistrate to another Government Officer before work could be undertaken even. But the utter lack of concern of some in the administrative hierarchy with whom personal rest had precedence over the urgency of starting relief operations filled the Swami with disgust and he was forced to remark, 'Sir, please practise a bit of charity along with your duty.' What was left unspoken was, 'How can you sleep when your own country men are suffering?'—a question as pertinent today as it was then.

As Swami Akhandananda was about to depart from Daudpur, he received the news that an old woman of ninety was on her deathbed. The plight of the poor was on the one hand forcing the Swami away from Daudpur, and on the other, it was dragging him back into their midst! With the help of a woman and a local landlord, the Swami nursed the old lady till she could take her usual meal of rice.

The dreadful spectacle of famine with scarcity of food and water as well as the human resource to tackle the crisis, made the Swami say, 'I did not feel like calling God merciful. I could not understand for what sin little children should die of starvation in a benign God's creation. I would flee the kingdom of such a benign God.' But where to? Which part of the world lacked in human misery and sorrow in one form or another? Which part of the world was outside of God's creation?

One cannot but recall (*Life of Swami Vivekananda*, vol. 1, pp. 125-6) that the same question arose in the mind of Swami Vivekananda early in life when he himself was in the midst of intense suffering: 'Does God really exist? And if so, does He really hear the fervent prayer of man? Then why is there no response to my passionate appeals? Why is there so much woe in His benign kingdom? Why does Satan rule in the realm of the Merciful God?' Swami Vivekananda at

that time recalled to his mind the words of Pandit Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, 'If God is good and gracious, why do millions of people die for want of a few morsels of food at times of famine?' One day Swamiji received his answer in a mysterious way:

One evening, after a whole day's fast and exposure to rain, I was returning home with tired limbs and a jaded mind; overpowered with exhaustion and unable to move a step forward, I sank down on the outer plinth of a house by the roadside. Various thoughts crowded in on my mind, and I was too weak to drive them off and fix my attention on anything in particular. Suddenly I felt as if by some divine power the coverings of my soul were being removed one after another. All my former doubts regarding the coexistence of divine justice and mercy, and the presence of misery in the creation of a Blissful Providence, were automatically solved. By a deep introspection I found the meaning of it all and was satisfied....The night was well-nigh over.

What could be the answer? The usual explanation for suffering (and for enjoyment) is that one suffers (and enjoys) the fruits of one's own actions committed in a former life. The solution in such a belief is to pray to God for His mercies, which is the method usually followed. But the question remains unanswered whether God's mercy can annul the divinely ordained effects of one's own karma. If one suffers on account of his earlier bad karma, what is my role in this scheme: to stay as a witness doing nothing in the matter, for the man is reaping just the fruits of his own karma, or to plunge in and, standing by the side of the sufferer, find for him a way out of it? Performance of good actions by oneself may counteract the effects of evil actions performed by him in earlier lives. But in the divine method is there a

cancellation of effects of actions, or is it the rule that one enjoys good *and* bad for the good *and* bad deeds committed? If the latter, there is no way out of suffering caused by some bad deeds committed earlier, for good and bad are both to be experienced. If the former, life is bound to be *entirely* good or bad depending on which has been the predominant nature of one's acts in past lives, which we find is not so. Indeed, the way of action is incomprehensible. Is it the goal of human life to alleviate misery for oneself and for others, which really amounts to making much of the sufferings and simultaneously asserting the world and our worldly experiences as real? Or, is it that in and through all this what is really intended is that one discover the Self within which is untouched by joy and pain? The last seems to be the purpose, but yet one cannot remain indifferent to human suffering as Swamiji said to the members of the Cow-protection Committee. It should certainly be argued that if it is that people suffer on account of their karma, it is my karma to help them out of it. This does not work counter to the divine dispensation of suffering meted out for one's bad deeds, but leaves open a way for practising a higher way of life for others, of seeing the divine in the sufferer and serving him for one's own realization of the human goal and for alleviating the suffering of 'my Beloved God' coming to me in the form of the suffering multitude. It is for us to realize and utilize this opportunity thrown open by God in his well-planned creation.

Swami Akhandananda too had *his* answer:

You are right that it is all the will of God. But I look upon the matter in this way that God occasionally sends forth such misfortunes in the world in order to select the number of his true and legitimate sons as it were for, a true and legitimate son inherits the qualities of his father and consequently the son of God

must possess some of that vast kindness which is only possible in God. At this crucial time those legitimate sons of God feeling much for the starving millions try their head and heart to relieve them. God selects these men as His true and legitimate sons and takes them to His side, by thus testing them. But those heartless creatures that reclining on the lap of thoughtless luxury, laugh away their times at this critical period are not His legitimate sons, but rather the sons of Satan. (*Brahmavadin*, vol. 2, p. 232)

It was at Mahula that Swami Akhandananda found an opportunity to serve the hungry children of that locality. There had lived in Mahula a Tantrika sadhu well-versed in the scriptures, whom the villagers called 'Dandi Thakur'. This form of reference was now used in respect of Swami Akhandananda. The brahmin families, despite the famine raging all around, began to invite him to their homes by turns and offer sherbet, sweets and fruits to the Swami. In the absence of the master of the house, the Swami, seeing the plight of the hungry children, would offer to them all but the sherbet, requesting them to go away quickly and partake of the fruits and sweets without anyone's knowledge. This act, a daily occurrence, shows us how we too can, in some way or other, offer what little we can to those around us who are needy, and how this act can be done without propaganda.

The Swami came across many more sights of the hungry who had lived without food for days, the afflicted who received no help, the poor who had resigned themselves to fate—old and young, men and women. He came across children whose parents had left the village because of the famine and had not returned to their homes. Was it heartless for parents to act so? Maybe, but it could also be because they did not like to see their little beloved ones die of starvation before their very eyes, and this they realized was inevi-

table.

What the poor needed was food, clothing, sympathy and care. Who was to provide these? Can a penniless, begging monk who himself depended on alms for his sustenance, do anything? He had a large heart, no doubt, and the will to wage a war with God even. But that was emotional outburst. What was the way, the practical means? At this stage we must recall Swami Vivekananda's words describing the needed qualities for one to be called a patriot: the heart to feel, the head to conceive, and the will or hands to execute the measures even in the face of opposition. Did Swami Akhandananda possess these?

Swami Akhandananda was in touch with his brother monks, who knew the unshakable determination of the Swami and the miserable plight that was all around him. From far away Madras Swami Ramakrishnananda wrote to Swami Akhandananda: 'A penniless Sannyasin as you are, it is not for you to provide thousands with food. You should rather come back to the Math.' From the Alambazar Math too Swami Premananda wrote two or three letters in the same vein. Swami Vivekananda, who was in Darjeeling then, enquired after Swami Akhandananda and at his direction, Swami Brahmananda wrote to Swami Akhandananda to return to the Math.

This we have narrated to just point out that even the brother monks felt that a sannyasin who depended merely on God could hardly come up to the level of providing food to multitudes who had become victims of famine. And famine is just one of many natural calamities that an Indian villager faces during his lifetime. He has known how to bear it all with cheer, how to let near and dear ones die, and how to struggle again to live a new life. Anyone who hears this tale will correctly understand that the strength which makes these poor villagers stand up is the belief in God notwithstanding the belief that these calamities

themselves are God-sent as a dispensation for the deeds committed in earlier lives. What the poor in India need, Swami Vivekananda rightly observed time and again, is food, not religion. They have religion enough.

Things took a brighter turn, when there came to Swami Akhandananda offer of help, though not without some amount of selfishness. Meanwhile, Swamiji returned to the Alambazar Math. He was greatly moved to read the letters from Swami Akhandananda, and wrote back, 'Bravo, my hero! Victory to the Guru! Go on with the work! Leave the supply of funds to me.' What more was needed for Swami Akhandananda to decide to achieve his aim—the removal of the affliction of the afflicted—, or perish in the attempt?

The first relief centre was opened at a festival hall belonging to a Bhattacharya family of Mahula. Rice was purchased from a nearby market and distributed to the needy in measured quantity. On 15 May 1897, eighteen persons from a neighbouring village received their ration supply. Thus the public undertaking of the Ramakrishna Mission in relief work was launched. The Swami himself used to visit villages when destitute inhabitants in large numbers swarmed around him to narrate their plight. The Swami's heart was large enough to accommodate more than he could cater to physically. Sri Nityagopal Mukherjee, Secretary of the District Famine Relief Committee, heard about the centre, saw it, and was thoroughly impressed by the systematic and earnest methods adopted by the Swami and his two assistants from Belur Math. Slowly, the work expanded and more and more of the afflicted had their wants removed. A road joining the main road to Mahula was built too, the argument for undertaking this work being two-fold: (i) to benefit the village transport, and (ii) to provide work for many and thus a means for survival. Sometimes rice had to be borrowed, there being no fi-

nance to purchase rice. On account of a lack of finance, the hungry who had so long been served could not be allowed to go without food! But from some unknown quarters or the other, finance always came in. This evoked the comment from one Sudhanshu Babu, a silk merchant of the locality, 'You see, how God helps in real, selfless work.'

It will not be fair to Swami Ramakrishnananda if it is not pointed out that behind the unexpected help which came from Madras, lay Swami Ramakrishnananda's frequent publication of appeals for further funds and a recounting of the progress of work in the famine-afflicted area in *Brahmavadin*, (vol. 2, pp. 232, 244, 265, 268, 313 and vol. 3, pp. 41, 211). It is thus that the Famine Relief Fund of the Mission began to grow.

It is a lesson in not losing one's heart even in the face of unexpected difficulties when we read that famine was followed on its heels by an earthquake: 'Before one calamity is over, another comes! Who can say how many lives have been lost and how many people rendered homeless!' Then too there was need for another kind of service: medical. This meant supply of proper diet and medicines and nursing. Cholera was considered a fatal disease and so none dared go near the patient. When Swami Akhandananda compelled a doctor to go with him to attend on a cholera patient, he did so reluctantly repeating all the while the names of all the gods and goddesses he knew. The recorder of a funny event of this nature writes, 'His [the doctor's] trembling voice made Swami Akhandananda think that the doctor's, not the patient's, last moments had come....'

News of these activities were being sent to Swamiji from time to time. In a letter from Swamiji to Swami Akhandananda, dated 15 June 1897, the Swami wrote:

This indeed is worship, worship of the Lord in the human tabernacle,

'*Nedam yadidam upāsute*—not this that people worship'. This is but the beginning, and unless we spread over the whole of India, nay, the whole earth, in that way, where lies the greatness of our Lord!

Let people see whether or not the touch of our Lord's feet confers divinity on man! It is this that is called liberation-in-life—when the last trace of egoism and selfishness is gone. Well done! Glory to the Lord! Gradually try to spread. If you can, go to Calcutta, and raise a fund with the help of another band of boys; set one or two of them to work at some place, and begin somewhere else. Spread in that way, and go on inspecting them. You will see that the work will gradually become permanent, and spread of religion and education will follow as a matter of course. I have given particular instructions to them in Calcutta. Do that kind of work, and I shall carry you on my shoulders—bravo! You will see that by degrees every district will become a centre—and that a permanent one.

The reader must not fail to observe at this stage that those who consider themselves to be followers of Swamiji and his ideal must translate these ideas into action. In this endeavour the letter just quoted will be an inspiration to them and a pointer on what each devotee of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother and Swamiji can and ought to do.

Now we come to another event, an eye opener. After three months of relief at Mahula, the need for funds growing more and more, Swami Brahmananda wrote to Swami Akhandananda, 'Send weekly reports to the press and appeal directly to the people. Those who do this, get assistance. How can you remove the want otherwise?' It was when Swami Akhandananda tried to respond to this letter by attempting to write an impressive report for publication, that tears

(Continued on page 714)

Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣad

SWAMI SRIDHARANANDA

(Continued from the previous issue)

सप्त प्राणाः प्रभवन्ति तस्मात्
सप्तार्चिषः समिधः सप्त होमाः।
सप्त इमे लोका येषु चरन्ति प्राणा
गुहाशया निहिताः सप्त सप्त॥

*Sapta prāṇāḥ prabhavanti tasmāt
saptārciṣaḥ samidhaḥ sapta homāḥ;
Sapta ime lokā yeṣu caranti prāṇā
guhāśayā nihitāḥ sapta sapta. (II.i.8)*

From Him emerge (come forth) the seven sense organs, from Him come the seven flames, their seven fuels (i.e. objects), the seven oblations (i.e. objects of knowledge) and the seven worlds (seats, places) wherein the seven life-breaths move; these dwell in the secret place in groups of seven.

Having told about the emergence of the cosmos from the Eternal Being, now the Upaniṣad comes to our own body. Everything perceived by us has emanated from Him. To me the most concrete thing is my own self; where have I come from and what is my nature? We are told that the seven sense organs have also taken a tangible shape from Him. These seven, located in the head, are: the two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, and the mouth or tongue. These are the orifices which are gateways to the world. The seven movements of life-force take place also because of Him. The seven effulgent fires (*diptis*) are the capacities of these seven sense organs to see, hear, smell, touch and taste. The seven fires mentioned earlier in śloka I.ii.4 as *kālī*, *karālī*, *manojavā*, *sulohitā*, etc. emanated from Him. So does the illumi-

nation of the sense organs enabling perception of objects which is similar to the illumination when oblations are offered in the flames. The process through which the light shines is the ritualistic fire (*homa*); the oblations (*samidhaḥ*) are the respective objects of the senses entering the sense organs. So, a comparison can be made with the *yajña* part of the *aparā-vidyā viśaya*. The intelligence in the sense organs is the effulgence; the respective objects of the senses are the oblations; and the result is the ritualistic fire. Thus, there is the removal of darkness of ignorance about the world and we become enlightened about it. From such functioning come the seven worlds or levels of consciousness, wherein the seven life-breaths move.¹

These groups of seven have their centre in the secret place of the heart (*guhāśaya*). God Himself has placed these, in groups of seven, in the heart cavity. Here, *guhāśaya* is that original source which was earlier referred to as *etasmāt*, i.e., the *antarātmā*, the Inner Being of everything. We are mistakenly trying to find Reality in the outer world, but we must consciously and persistently try to find Him in the hidden cave of our own hearts. First, let us find Him inside; then His presence outside will automatically become evident. Thereafter, the entire cosmos will reflect that experience.

अतः समुद्रा गिरयश्च सर्वेऽ-

स्मात्स्यन्दते सिन्धवः सर्वरूपाः।

1. Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā, chapter IV, śloka 25-33.

अतश्च सर्वा ओषधयो रसश्च
येनैष भूतैस्तिष्ठते ह्यन्तरात्मा॥

*Ataḥ samudrā girayaś-ca sarve-
asmāt syandante sindhavaḥ sarva-rūpāḥ;
Ataś-ca sarvā oṣadhayo rasaś-ca
yenaiṣa bhūtais-tiṣṭhate
hy-antar-ātmā. (II.i.9)*

From Him emerge the seas and the mountains. From Him flow out rivers of every kind. And from Him issue all the herbs as well as their juice, whereby That Inner Soul exists in the beings.

Then from Him come all the vast and deep oceans and all the huge mountains. So also rivers of every form roll out from Him. From Him have come all vegetation, corns, etc. and their sap which is of medicinal value. By means of this essence the Internal Self dwells in the midst of all the elements and beings of the world.

In this *mantra* are gathered all the world objects—the 'many' (*bahu*) and the 'all' (*sarva*) referred to in many places. We have imputed reality to them because they are tangible and concrete to our senses. But when our body-sense along with its appurtenances and qualities are destroyed in *turiya*, then the names-forms-utilities of the multifarious world are still seen but they are not held to be the Reality or to be separate from us. The individual Self becomes merged in the Highest Self, and only the Atman-awareness remains. Swami Vivekananda expresses this in his sonnet, 'The Hymn of Samadhi'. Starting from the gross state of *jāgrat avasthā* one goes into *nirvikalpa samādhi*, and later comes out of it. These are the processes of *anuloma* (towards) and *viloma* (reverse). In our present condition, the whole world is impinging on us. Slowly the diversities of names-forms melt away, and what remains is the sense of something

beyond the domain of language (*vāk*) and mind (*manas*). Only such a person enjoys that Reality which is indescribable. Here it is suggested that the Reality or essence underlying everything is known by experiencing our *antarātmā*, the Indwelling Soul, in which all existences are dissolved in *turiya*.

पुरुष एवेदं विश्वं कर्म
तपो ब्रह्म परामृतम्।
एतद्यो वेद निहितं गुहायां
सोऽविद्याग्रन्थिं विकरतीह सोम्य॥

*Puruṣa evedaṁ viśvaṁ karma
tapo brahma parāmṛtam;
Etad-ya veda nihitaṁ guhāyām
so'vidyā-granthiṁ vikratīha,
somya. (II.i.10)*

The Person (Puruṣa) Himself is everything here; work (karma) and knowledge as also austerity (tapa)—He who knows That as parā (transcendent) and amṛta-rūpa (of supreme immortal nature) Brahman set in the secret place of the heart of all beings, destroys here (in this world) the knot of ignorance, O sober friend!

In conclusion, the teacher says that in this world there is nothing but the Being of the nature of *Saccidānanda*. All these objects which are so dear to your heart are but the manifestations of That Divine Person. The teacher firmly confirms that in every form one conceives Him. He is also manifest as work and austerity (or knowledge). Duties are done to achieve the goal of knowledge, Brahman—sublime and deathless. We have to know Him as seated and rooted in the innermost cavity of the heart in all beings. First we should see that Reality within ourselves as 'I exist' and then see, hear, touch, taste and smell Him in all other objects perceived outside and interact with these objects in the light of this understanding. Ver-

ily, He is permeating this whole cosmos. Even if you think that the Chosen Deity is in the temple, His divine qualities enter you when you go to the temple. Likewise, if you think of the Reality as residing in the heart cavity, He permeates the whole cosmos.

For one who has learnt to recognize that Reality as hidden in all beings including oneself, the knot of ignorance (*avidyā granthi*) is rent asunder. Sri Ramakrishna gives the example: if you burn a hemp rope, the form

remains but its binding power (*bandhana śakti*) disappears. So, the knot of ignorance is not only untied, but also burnt so that the question of recurrence of *avidyā* does not arise. O tranquil and composed one, O Śaunaka! This will happen even during one's very life time. One will not have to await death for putting an end to *ajñāna* about Atman or Brahman.

(to be continued)

Human Woe-III

(Continued from page 711)

rolled down his cheeks on to the writing paper before him (see September 1997 editorial). In a second attempt to do this, the Master came before his mind's eye and said to him, 'Do you want me or the public? You are to send a report to the press, not for me, but for the public. If you want the public, you are to send regular reports to the press. Now choose between the two.' We must not fail to notice that when Swami Akhandananda was in the midst of a most depressing situation, he did not *begin* by writing columns in the press. Help came, work expanded. Was it not God himself who was standing by his side? That same God was telling him, 'Now choose between the two.' The Swami had made his choice long before, the report of famine relief was left unwritten.

What started in a humble way as the first relief centre, managed and conducted by the Ramakrishna Mission, soon paved the way for the founding of the first orphanage with eight orphans as well at Mahula (*Brahmavadin*, vol. 3, pp. 212, 772), which orphanage, now at Sargachi, is celebrating its centenary this year. It is seen from a perusal of the *Brahmavadin* that Swami Akhandananda did write reports about the receipts and disbursements in respect of the orphanage (*Brahmavadin*, vol. 4, pp. 557, 691). Perhaps this was necessitated by the lack of correctness of the reporting (*Brahmavadin*, vol. 4, p. 350) by Heiralal Dutta (who signed for Swami Akhandananda) which was acknowledged by the Swami himself (*Brahmavadin*, vol. 4, p. 557). □

Like the wind blowing from flower to flower, men travel from truth to truth, and have thus slowly proceeded towards the one great eternal Truth; this way, sooner or later, they will all attain the consummation of their life by knowing that which is beyond mind and speech.

—Compiled by Sabina Thorne, *Precepts for Perfection*, p. 96

One Hundred Years of Madras Math: Its Origin and Growth

The following is a compilation of the inspiring account of the origin and growth of Sri Ramakrishna Math at Chennai culled from various sources by the editorial board of Prabuddha Bharata.

Swami Vivekananda's life was very short; but the power released by it was so tremendous that it created a revolution in the world of thought. In terms of concrete achievements, so far as permanent institutions are concerned, a number of them were ushered in between 1893 and 1899, both in India and in America. It is noteworthy that Madras Math is the one centre in South India which is directly traceable to the great Swami's inspiration. Over a hundred years the Math has grown mightily giving flowers, fruits, shade to many a weary soul—both Indian and foreign—, who have sought shelter under it.

The Inspiration

Swami Vivekananda's wanderings in India ended when he reached Madras in January 1893. His young, enthusiastic disciples in Madras were primarily responsible for his historic participation at the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago. The great success that Swami Vivekananda met with at the Parliament and during his subsequent 4-year sojourn in the West had a tremendous effect on his native land. The repercussion of his success turned the mental attitude of Indians overnight from one of despondence to youthful buoyancy. In a word, India was awakened, never to sleep again, though she still had to be started on the way to a new successful career of spiritual and social rejuvenation. How far Sri Ramakrishna Math, Chennai (still 'Madras Math' for the devotees) has been instrumental in fulfilling the dream of Swamiji, we shall see during the course of this article.

The people of Madras literally devoured every quotation from Swamiji and all reports of his unparalleled triumph. They were transported with joy, the papers were full of Vivekananda and large and influential meetings were held in different parts of

India to draft congratulations to the redeemer of the Hindu faith and the vindicator of the nation's prestige. Of these meetings, those in erstwhile Madras Presidency were most noteworthy, and to these Swamiji sent suitable replies packed with hints for future action. He had, throughout his stay in the West, kept himself in close touch with his Madras followers, and his letters to them contained ideas that he wanted to work out in the broader field of India. Some of the letters also communicated Swamiji's directions to his immediate followers in Madras.

Although Swami Vivekananda noted from across the seas all the development that his success in the West was ushering into India, and he had now only to come over to take the reins in hand, he was in no hurry to do so; he waited for the right moment, while he took stock of the situation and kept on preparing the ground. He noted that Madras could not boast as yet of a permanent Ramakrishna or Vedanta centre. Of course, there were so many devoted hearts who ran the periodicals, *Brahmavadin* and *Prabuddha Bharata*. There were also occasional celebrations of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday on a humble scale. And there were informal

study circles that carried on their work spasmodically. But, though not wanting in enthusiasm, the devotees had no leader on the spot and no financial backing to undertake anything of an imposing character.

When Swami Vivekananda returned to India in February 1897, he received in Madras an unprecedented welcome. He had a special love for Madras and at that time he stayed there for nine days at Ice House / Castle Kernan (now Vivekanandar Illam). All his talks and lectures during this time were saturated with one idea: the worship of God in man. But Swamiji knew that where lectures and letters could at best induce intellectual conviction, prolonged personal contact and persuasion effected a conversion. As a first tangible result of this, Swami Ramakrishnananda, under the direction of Swamiji, abandoned his twelve years' secluded life of worship and self-culture to proceed to Madras in March 1897, to start a Ramakrishna centre there. The monastery was the fulfilment of a promise Swami Vivekananda had made to the Madras devotees. On his return from the West to Madras, Swamiji was entreated by his staunch followers to send a Swami to build a permanent centre there. As that was very much in agreement with his own line of thought, he said, 'Yes, I will send you one who is more orthodox than your most orthodox brahmins, and more learned than your pundits.' Evidently, he had in mind Swami Ramakrishnananda, who seems to have been divinely fashioned for the South Indian work. Thus was initiated the Ramakrishna Order's activities in South India, and Madras Math became the first branch centre of the Ramakrishna Math in the South.

The Advent of Swami Ramakrishnananda

Arriving at Madras with Swami Sadananda as his assistant, Swami Ramakrishnanandaji started the monastery at once under the name 'Ramakrishna Home'

at a rented house in Triplicane, on the Ice House Road, paying thirty rupees a month. The house (Flora Cottage) no longer exists. This monastery was a replica of the parent monastery at Alambazar, with its daily routine of worship and associated functions, and with the added element of extensive preaching. Within three months, the Math was removed at the instance of the proprietor of the Ice House to some of the ground floor rooms of that palatial building, also known as Castle Kernan. This extensive property, with a three-storied house and land around, belonged to Mr. Biligiri Iyengar, a disciple of Swami Vivekananda, who set apart those few rooms for the Math without any rent. From there too Swami Ramakrishnananda conducted his classes on the *Gita* and Vedanta, and delivered public lectures on various subjects—expanding his sphere of activities all the time and getting more appreciation and better response.

Swami Ramakrishnananda was an original thinker, an erudite scholar, a forceful speaker and above all, an illumined soul whose total dependence on God was tangible even to the least observant. To the earnest, his life had a message and his work kindled in others the right attitude. Even though he had come to Madras giving up the worship of his Master's relics, he quickly adapted himself to the work at hand and became responsible for moulding the lives of many sincere aspirants in and around Madras. In the monastery at Castle Kernan, Swami Ramakrishnananda worked with his characteristic zeal and earnestness as a result of which the Madras public became interested in his work. The multifarious activities that the Madras Math carries on today were all initiated by the great Swami himself. With Madras as the centre, gradually the work of the Ramakrishna Movement extended to other parts of South India.

From Ice House to Mylapore

The Math at Madras continued to function from the Ice House till the end of 1907. Due to certain changes in circumstances, it had to be shifted to its present site on a plot (in front of the existing shrine building) at Mylapore. This plot was gifted by Sri A. Kondiah Chettiar, a close devotee of the Math. Adjacent plots were acquired in subsequent years.

The Visit of Spiritual Luminaries

Apart from its association with Swami Ramakrishnananda, this Math at Mylapore was sanctified by the visits of Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi, and Swami Brahmananda, Swami Premananda, Swami Shivananda, Swami Abhedananda and Swami Vijnanananda—all direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. Swami Ramakrishnananda is reported to have had two desires after he founded the Madras Math: he had wished to bring to the South the Holy Mother and Swami Brahmananda, the living representatives of Sri Ramakrishna, and make South India blessed by their presence. At the earnest prayer of Swami Ramakrishnananda, the Holy Mother visited Madras in the early part of 1911. He received her with deep reverence, attended to all her personal needs, and in spite of his indifferent health, accompanied her on her pilgrimage to Rameswaram. Swami Brahmananda visited Madras Math not less than thrice, spending fairly long spells of time there. His first visit was towards the end of 1908, and he stayed in the Math until the spring of 1909. His second visit was in July–August 1916. The Math building in Madras, constructed in 1907, had proved to be defective in structure and needed to be pulled down. In anticipation of this, a plan had been prepared for a stronger and more commodious building, for which the foundation was laid by Swami Brahmananda on 4 August 1916. It was inaugurated by him on 24 April 1917. Madras Math again received Swami Brahmananda on his

South Indian tour in May 1921. During this visit, he introduced Durga Puja in the image. Contact with him was a novel and elevating experience for the Madras devotees, who enjoyed his uplifting presence so much that for a long time they remembered those happy days and talked of them with palpable enthusiasm.

The Past Seventy-five Years

Much has been said about the early history and the holy association of Madras Math. Let us now turn to the question with which we began: How far has this Math been instrumental in actualizing Swami Vivekananda's mission. Swamiji's greatest achievement lay in re-orienting the outlook of his brother disciples from ideas of personal salvation to a sympathetic comprehension of the needs of the world, which led to a submersion of the individual in the service of the All. He believed that it was absolutely necessary to have a nucleus of pure and self-sacrificing monks who could realize his vision and the spiritual regeneration of India. So, this monastery has always laid special emphasis on the training of sannyasins and brahmacharins. Regular study classes are held in addition to religious training, and a high intellectual and spiritual atmosphere is maintained. Many distinguished monks of the Order, well known for their excellent work in India and abroad, have had the benefit of this kind of training which Madras Math provides.

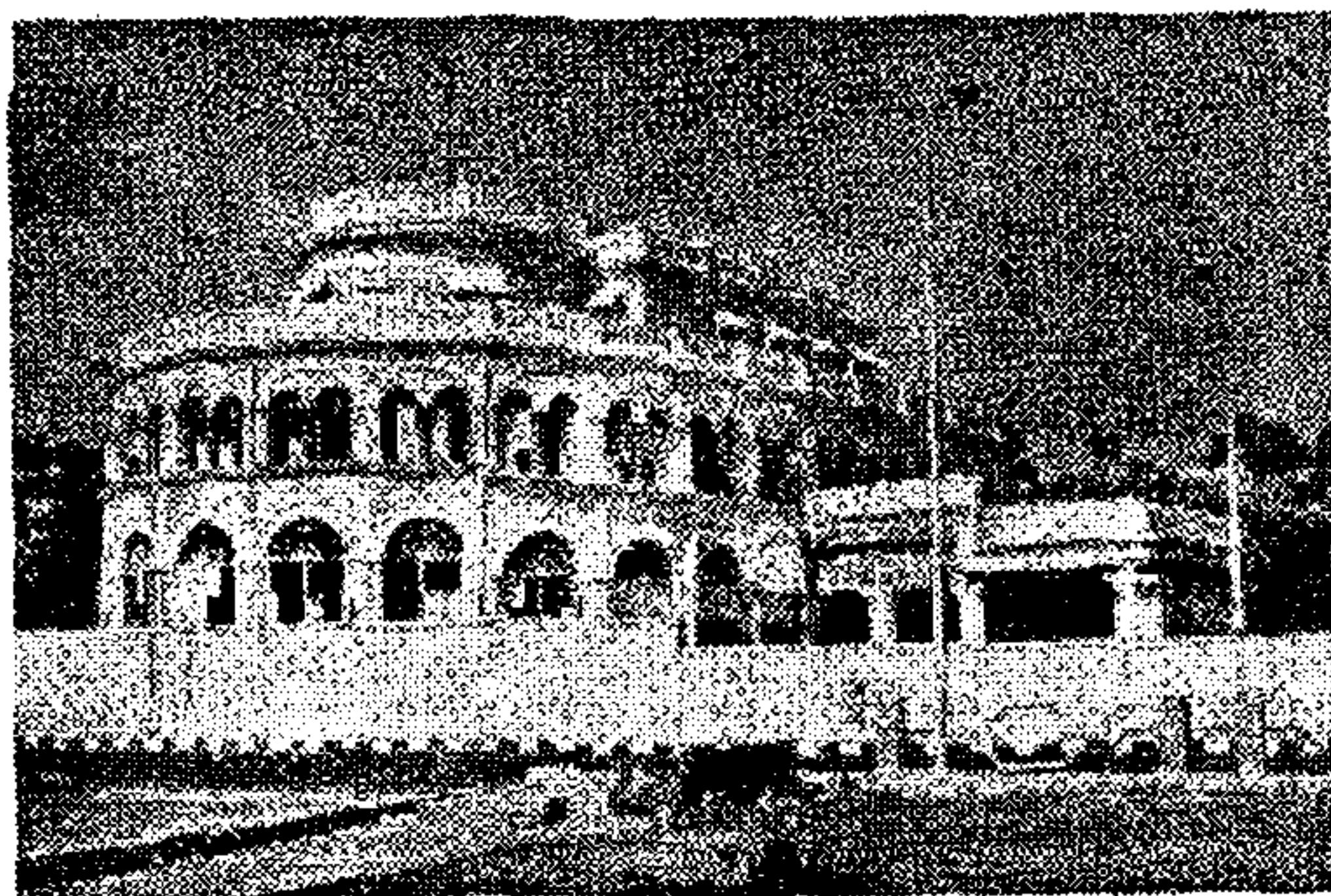
The multifarious activities that the monastic members of the Madras Math carry on today were inspired by Swami Vivekananda and initiated by Swami Ramakrishnananda. Down the years, the Math has recorded remarkable development in its activities as regards the intensity and extent of service due to greater involvement of devotees, government agencies and volunteers, and the use of modern technology to cope with



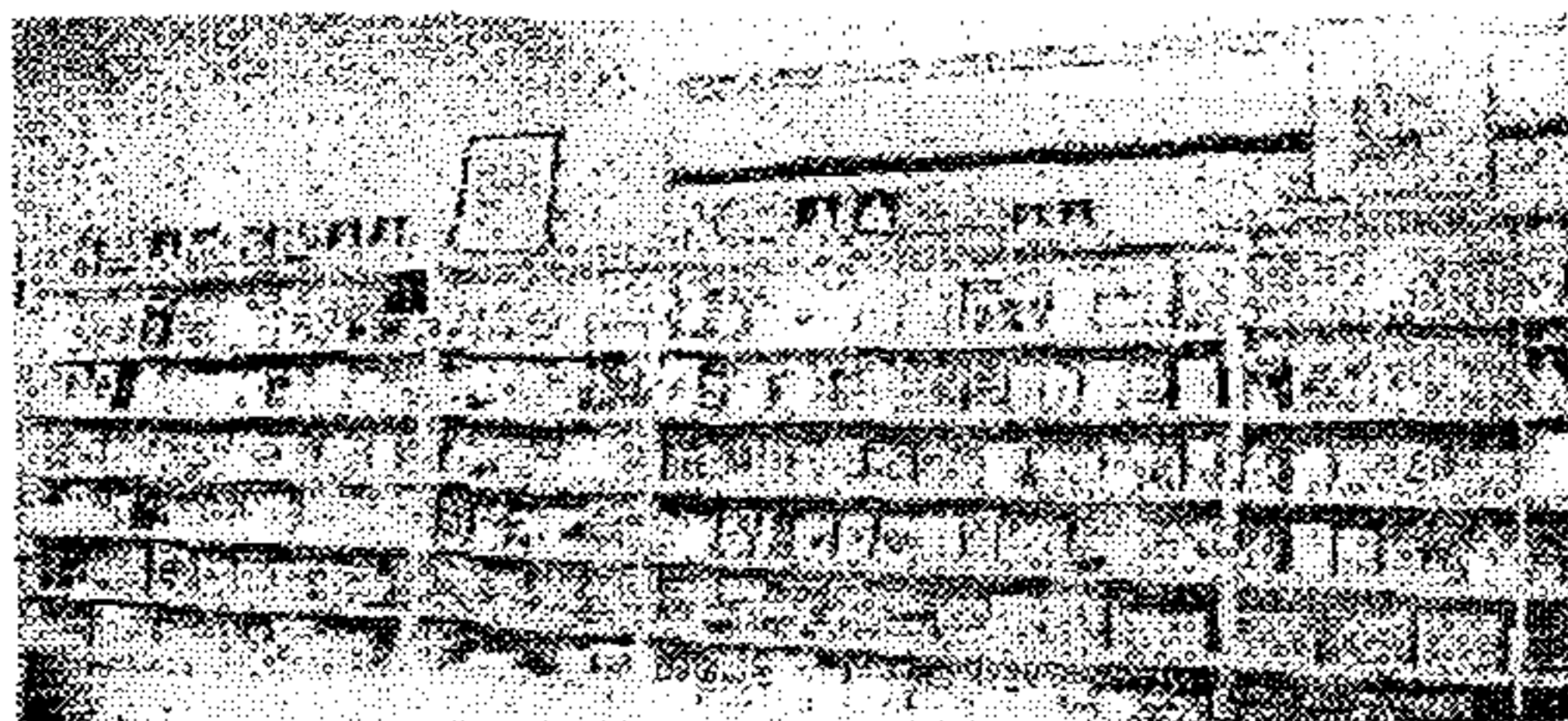
Swami Ramakrishnananda



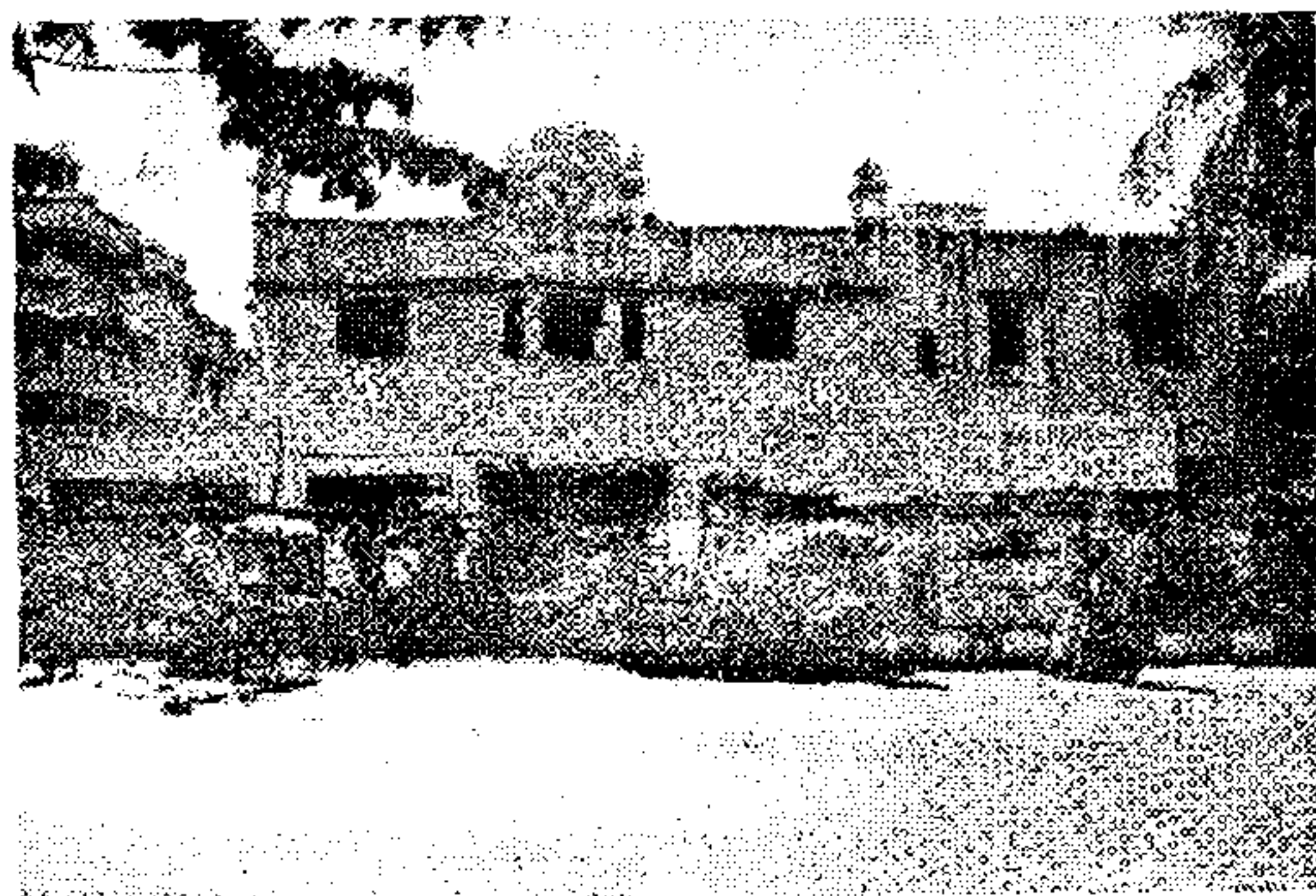
The old Madras Math building



Ice House



Publication Department



The Madras Math Dispensary



The Madras Math Library



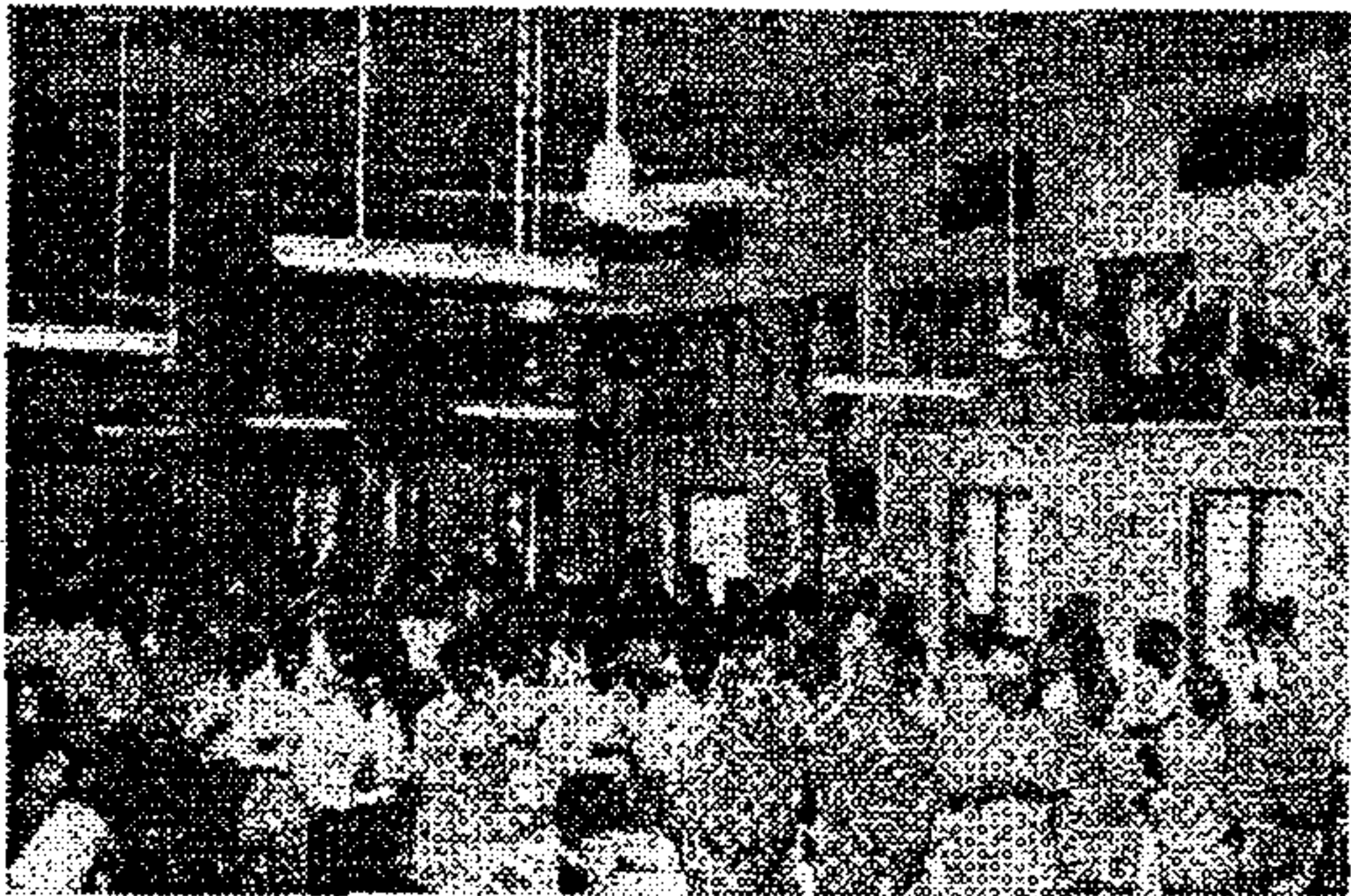
Youth Forum



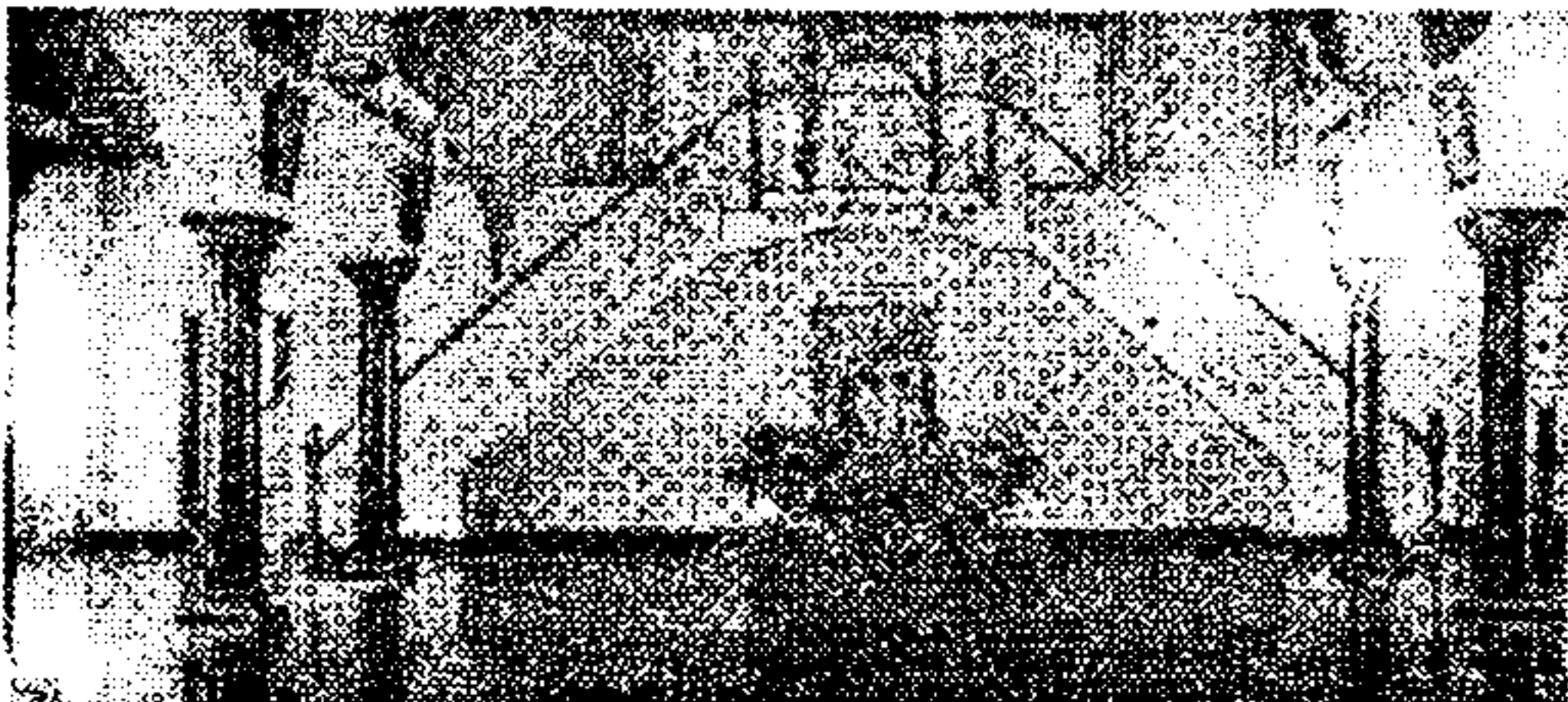
National School Building



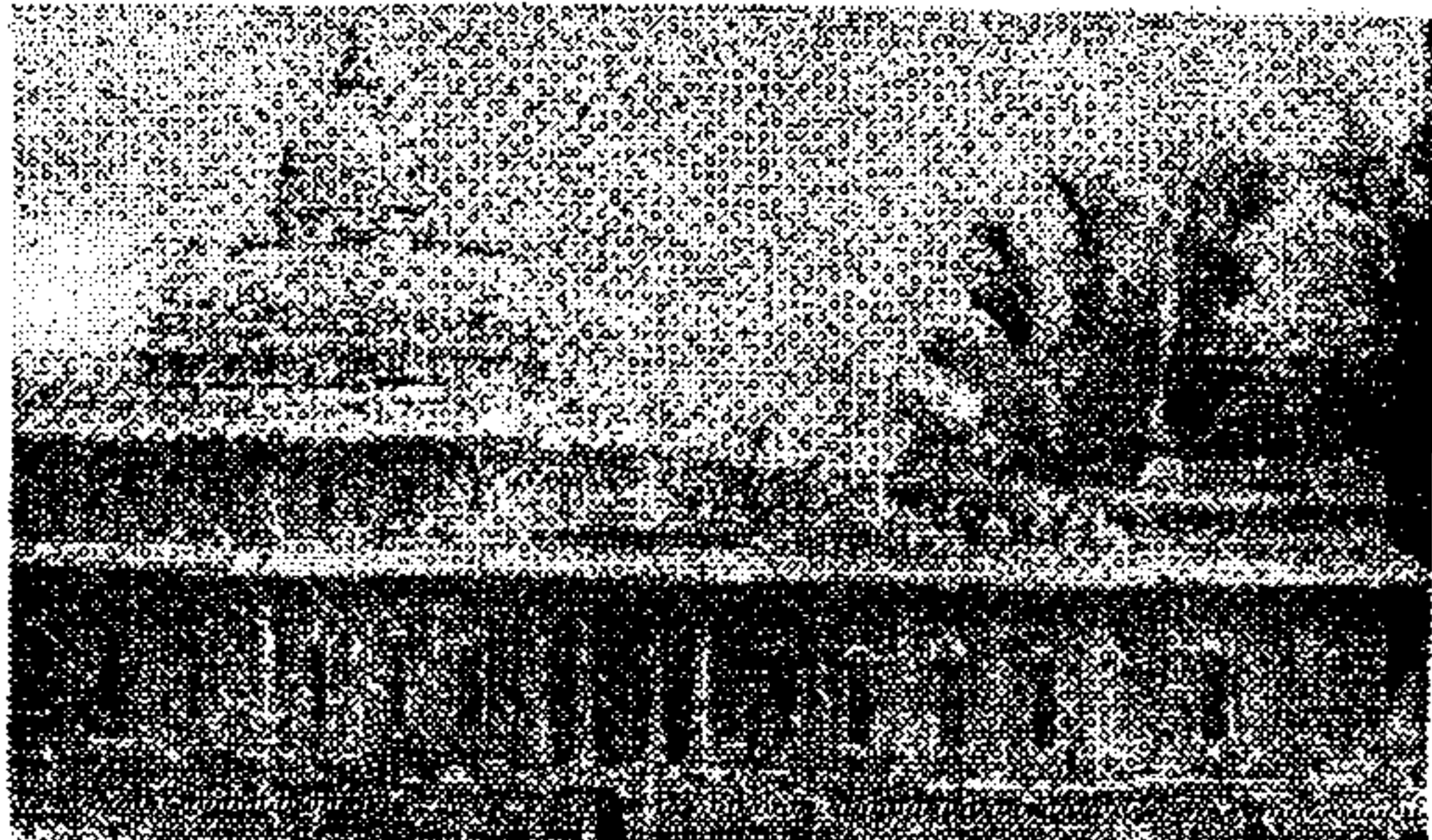
Relief and Rehabilitation



Classes/Retreat



The present Madras Math Shrine



*The proposed Madras Math Shrine
under construction*

The Publication Department

The Math's Publication Department was Swami Ramakrishnananda's conception. He thought the Math would be doing a useful activity if it published religious literature, especially the Math's literature, to serve the needs of the public. Some of his speeches were brought out in book form. The first book came out in March 1908; it was *The Universe and Man*. Thus was laid the foundation of an important publication centre of the organization—at Mylapore, Madras. Other books followed in succession. Today, this Publication Department has developed into one of the most popular houses of religious literature in India with over 800 titles, many of which have undergone several editions, in four languages (English, Tamil, Telugu and Sanskrit) on Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Yoga and Vedanta. Special mention must in this connection be made of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* and *Sri Ramakrishna, The Great Master* which are masterpieces. To improve the quality of publication, the Department makes use of computers and laser printers, and has its own offset press (started in May 1988). Apart from the showroom in the Math premises, there are two more at Madras Central and Egmore railway stations.

Besides these, the Publication Department has a magazine section which publishes three monthly journals—*Vedanta Kesari* in English (started in May 1914), *Sri Ramakrishna Vijayam* in Tamil (started in 1921), and *Sri Ramakrishna Prabha* in Telugu (started in 1944). In a way, the English monthly was a successor to the *Brahmavadin* which had been started in 1895 by Alasinga Perumal but had ceased to appear after May 1913 (except for the issue of March–April next). The pages of all these journals are devoted to religion and philosophy in general with due emphasis on the Indian standpoint and to the propagation of the ideas of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda

in particular. Mention must be made of another monthly journal, the *Prabuddha Bharata*, which was started in Madras way back in July 1896 with Mr. Rajam Aiyer as its very capable editor. This magazine was a favourite with Swami Vivekananda and had his blessings and support. Swamiji was ever in touch with it and helped it in every possible way. (Due to the untimely death of its brilliant young editor, Rajam Aiyer, the magazine had to be discontinued first, and was later shifted to Almora in the Himalayas and later still to its present location at Mayavati.)

To promote the objectives of the Publication Department, the Madras Math organizes or takes part in book fairs frequently. Two such fairs were held in October 1989 and January 1991. A variety of cultural competitions too were conducted for schools students during the fair.

The Charitable Dispensary

Another chief activity of the Madras Math is its Charitable Dispensary and Diagnostic Centre. Started in 1925 to render service to the poor and helpless patients in and around the locality, the dispensary had even during its first year 970 patients, and in 1995–1996 it had as many as 2,07,399 patients! What started as a humble dispensary made rapid strides during the post-independence years when many specialist departments—Eye, ENT, Paediatrics, X-ray and Dental—were opened. In addition, to these an Antenatal Clinic, a TB Clinic, a Laboratory and a Homeopathic Section were started. The medical services rendered by the Dispensary have become so immensely popular that the beneficiaries of each of its departments have to be counted by the thousand. To meet the ever-increasing demand for its service, the Dispensary was obliged to open new departments to treat more complex and acute cases. These consisted of cancer, cardiology, endocrinol-

ogy, gastro-enterology, gynaecology, neurology, orthopaedics, physiotherapy and skin departments. Besides renowned specialists, the dispensary avails the services of highly qualified physicians, surgeons, social workers and volunteers. Most of the medicines are given free of cost and only nominal charges are taken for costly medicines. The same holds good to the various tests conducted at the Dispensary, which is well equipped with modern facilities like ECG, Ultrasound Scanner, Audiogram, UGI Endoscope, and many more. Indeed, it would not at all be an exaggeration to say that the modest-sounding dispensary is in fact a fair-sized polyclinic.

With the aim of providing total health-care to people in rural areas, the Madras Math launched a weekly mobile medical service in September 1981. The unit served Nattarampalli and the surrounding villages. Since 1987, this weekly mobile medical unit with honorary doctors, paramedical staff and volunteers has been attending to the needs of more than 600 patients every Sunday. Nearly 50 villages of Chengalpattu District near Madras are covered. Preventive work has been started recently, under which immunization, health education, etc. are planned.

The Ramakrishna Centenary Library

To fulfil a long-felt want, the Ramakrishna Centenary Library was opened in May 1939 for the use of the Math inmates and the general public. This well-equipped library with a children's section has more than 30,000 books on Religion, Philosophy, Science and Humanities in all the four South Indian languages (Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Malayalam), and in Sanskrit, English, Bengali and Hindi. It also keeps nearly 300 dailies and periodicals. To suit modern trends, the library runs a cassette section which has nearly 500 audio cassettes containing talks, lectures and devotional music.

Educational Activities

On the educational side the Madras Math has under its direct management two schools that cater for the poor children of the George Town locality. An elementary school which Swami Ramakrishnananda himself founded in 1906, was in course of time converted into a primary school and a high school for girls. Management of the original school was taken over by the Math in June 1921. Now known as the Ramakrishna Math National Primary School and the Ramakrishna Math Vivekananda Centenary Girls' High School, they have a combined student strength of about 1500. The new building of the primary school was declared open in October 1980.

Since 1983, the Math has also been extending the benefit of free tuition to about 100 students studying in the 10th and +2 standards. Coaching classes for school children are also held at the Ramakrishnapuram colony.

The Bala Mandir

Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda held that the youth, the pure in heart, alone can absorb higher ideals and accomplish things worthwhile. Both of them have interpreted our ancient spiritual truths in a way easily graspable by the present age. Our youth must mould their characters in the light of their teachings for their own good and that of the nation. They must be made conscious of their responsibility in rebuilding the nation. The Madras Math affords opportunities and a conducive environment to the youth to imbibe higher values and actualize them in life.

The Bala Mandir is a programme for children in the age group of 8–12 years designed to instil in them love for cultivating the lofty values of our cultural and spiritual heritage and to bring out their talents through *yogasanas*, speaking, painting, de-

votional music, etc. The well-balanced routine of the Bala Mandir makes for the all-round development of its young members—physical, mental, moral and spiritual. The Vivekananda Youth Forum is a group of boys beyond the school-going age, interested in building a spiritual life and rendering service to humanity. They meet weekly, take part in discussions on social problems, listen to religious discourses, clarify their ideas about their own inner development and find out how they can serve others.

Programmes for the Youth

Over the years the Madras Math has organized many Youth Conventions and National Integration Camps. The National Youth Day on the 12 January (Swami Vivekananda's birthday) is also celebrated every year in a grand manner. These functions sometimes extend to two or three days and include a variety of attractive programmes like inter-school literary competitions, quiz contests, lectures with question-answer sessions, seminars and group discussions. Senior monks of the Ramakrishna Order, eminent citizens and dignitaries share their thoughts with young people between 16 and 30 years of age. It is needless to say that the overwhelming response of hundreds of boys and girls who participate in these events is highly gratifying to the organizers.

Relief and Rehabilitation Projects

At various times during its one hundred years' existence the Madras Math has conducted a number of relief and rehabilitation projects, extending its strong helping hand to people in times of distress. It must be noted that as early as in 1897 when Swami Akhandanandaji Maharaj started relief work in Mahula in the Murshidabad District, Swami Ramakrishnananda appealed in the *Brahmavadin* for help and assistance of the public to the cause of eradication of famine and its after-effects. The people of Madras and sympathetic persons from abroad

responded generously to the call given by the Swami. However, the first recorded relief project conducted in the locality was in July 1928, when fire broke out in Kosapet, Mylapore, and left many families homeless. Relief was rushed in by the Math in the form of medical aid, food, clothing and housing. As a result of this relief work, a new colony named Ramakrishnapuram came into being. Because of a batch of selfless workers who came forward to serve the colony, in later years it developed into a useful centre of Harijan uplift work. The Math continues its service here in a shrine hall where coaching classes and lessons on Indian spiritual and cultural heritage are given to poor children.

Special mention must be made of at least one major relief operation carried out by the Madras Math in the recent past. With help from the Mission's Coimbatore branch, the Madras Math took up the 'Tamil Nadu Flood Rehabilitation Project' and completed it within the five months of April–August, 1992. Sixty-five brick houses with RCC roofs were constructed and handed over to the beneficiaries of Kanyakumari District.

Through dozens of other major and minor flood or cyclone relief works done by the Madras Math, large quantities of food materials, clothing, utensils, medicines and a variety of utility items have been distributed among hundreds of affected families throughout Tamil Nadu.

Spiritual Activities

Over and above these activities performed in the spirit of worship, the Math conducts regular worship and bhajans in which all can join. Special pujas are held on auspicious days. Birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Ramakrishnananda, and those of other divinities like Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Christ and others are also observed

with due solemnity. The evening *arati* is preceded by a 45-minute class on a theme of uplifting nature which equips the group of devotees for a fruitful participation in the vesper service at the shrine. In addition to these, regular classes for the benefit of the public are held at the Math in which sacred books are expounded and talks are given on popular but serious subjects by the Swamis or other highly cultured scholars. Individual instructions are given to interested spiritual aspirants through private interviews by the senior Swamis and from time to time spiritual retreats are conducted which enables devotees to spend a whole day (or more) in the Math in a purely spiritual atmosphere.

The Shrine

The present shrine of the Madras Math was consecrated nearly sixty years ago, on 7 November 1938, just behind the older one which was now converted into a prayer hall thereby affording more space for congregational worship. Even this can no more accommodate the growing number of devotees, specially on festival days. So a big granite temple is under construction, with a prayer hall where a thousand devotees can sit for prayer and meditation. The foundation stone for this new temple was laid on 1 December 1994 by Srimat Swami Bhtueshanandaji Maharaj, the President of the Ramakrishna Order, and construction work is progressing steadily. The proposed temple will combine the distinct charac-

teristics of Ramakrishna temples with traditional South Indian architecture and will reflect Sri Ramakrishna's message of religious harmony and universality.

Summing Up

The foregoing pages have only given the readers a picture, suggestive rather than exhaustive, of the very many developments effected in the several fields of activity carried on under the aegis of Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras. When we look back and visualize how the humble beginnings made by Swami Ramakrishnananda a century ago have developed today, we realize how much a man can achieve when he allies himself with God and works for the good of the world. Since Swami Ramakrishnananda came to the South carrying the banner of his Master, many men and women have dedicated themselves to a life of renunciation and service. He, by his indefatigable energy and devotion to the cause of Sri Ramakrishna, laid the foundation of a great work that struck root in Madras and spread out all over South India. Thus, the Madras Math which grew up under the maternal care of Swami Ramakrishnananda, has proved to be the illustrious mother of all South Indian centres of the Ramakrishna Movement. He tilled the soil and sowed the seed. Those who came after him manured and fostered the crop, and we are today reaping a rich harvest. All glory to Swami Ramakrishnananda! □

You must always bear in mind that the most essential things to enable you to realize God are: 1. Spending your time in the company of men who have already realized God or are on the right track in this direction; 2. The perusal of the life histories of great lovers of God; and, 3. Constant repetition of the Lord's name.

—Compiled by Sabina Thorne, *Precepts for Perfection*, p. 80

Life in Karachi Before and After the Birth of Pakistan*

SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

Revered Maharaj, a Vice-President of the Ramakrishna Order, goes down the memory lane in this informative piece which is the outcome of an interview he gave to Sri Uttamchand Chandiram in 1979. The lapse of more than 18 years does not in any way detract from the human and historical interest of the events of a tumultuous period in the history of the sub-continent with which he was associated. Revered Maharaj was a witness to the change from a peaceful and harmonious Karachi in the pre-Independent era to a strife-torn Karachi after the birth of Pakistan.

Revered Maharaj stayed in Karachi for six years from 9 August 1942 to 9 August 1948. He landed in Karachi on the day when India under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership resolved on its final (non-violent) assault on the citadel of imperialism. The nation was electrified by the Mahatma's call for 'Quit India'. Revered Maharaj, however, concentrated on his spiritual ministry to begin with; his weekly Gita classes attracted more and more people week after week. He encouraged the study of Sanskrit in schools. At the same time, in keeping with Swami Vivekananda's humanistic concerns, Revered Maharaj also engaged himself in social service. He collected rice for the victims of the Bengal famine of 1943 and money for the fire-victims of Sukkur. Wherever there was human suffering, Revered Maharaj responded with a sympathetic heart. Maharaj evoked admiration and loyalty; he established warm and friendly relationship with persons of high intellectual calibre in all communities. He was close to Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, India's pre-eminent philosopher, who, when there was high tension in Karachi, became instrumental for Revered Maharaj's return to India for doing much more useful work. Revered Maharaj's sojourn in Karachi is but one of the glowing pages in the luminous book of his life.

Question: We have heard that you were the Head of the Ramakrishna Mission, Karachi, from 9 August 1942 to 9 August 1948. How was Karachi in your time, Maharaj?

Answer: Karachi was then extremely clean, the weather was fine all through the year, except in one or two summer months

and the population was only about three lakhs. It was a very peaceful town, and there was very little communal trouble.

Question: What was the contribution of your Mission to the people of Karachi, in particular, and Sind in general?

Answer: I reached Karachi at midnight on 9 August 1942. We had a Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama there for several years. I was going to Karachi from Burma, which was being invaded by the Japanese. Because of that, the British Government sent information to the C.I.D. police in Sind to watch my movements and actions. So, for the first one year, wherever I went in Sind, there

* This article first appeared in the *Bhavan's Journal*, 15 August 1995 issue. We are thankful to Revered Swami Atmaramanandaji Maharaj for sending this article, with the permission of Srimat Swami Ranganathanandaji Maharaj, for publication in *Prabuddha Bharata*.

would be the police and they would ask me such questions as 'Why are you here? Where are you going?' They gave me all sorts of pinpricks. Especially, I remember an event in the town of Larkana, Bhutto's native town (Bhutto had a house in Karachi opposite our Ashrama), after my lecture in the High School hall. A policeman was there. He heard the lecture on the *Gita* and, at the end, came to me saying, 'Maharaj, I could not understand anything of what you said.' I replied, 'That is why you misreport what Indian patriots speak!' After the first year, the top British C.I.D. officer sent two Indian C.I.D. officers to our Ashrama to question me. The main question was, 'Are the Burmese people anti-British?' I said, 'Yes, thoroughly.' They assured me that I would not be shadowed by the police any more. They also said that they were attending my Sunday *Gita* classes which had been started a week after my arrival. I told them that one day's experience would wipe out the evil they were doing against their fellow countrymen! One of them accepted my remark, but the other person objected saying that even in England there was C.I.D.. To this I replied, 'Yes, but in England the police take a person as good until he or she proves otherwise, while in India, the police take a person to be a criminal until he or she proves otherwise.'

We started our weekly Sunday evening classes on the *Gita*. On the first Sunday, about 50 people came. The audience increased week after week—200, 300, 400, 500 up to 1000. That was something very encouraging. More and more people began to show interest in the universal and practical teachings of the *Gita*, in the philosophy of Sanatana Dharma. Many people came to the Ashrama walking about four or five km. from the centre of the town. The Ashrama was located in a Muslim locality, where the Sindhi Muslims were generally peaceful and tolerant. Along with the Hindus, some Muslims also began to attend the lectures, as also

some Christians and many Parsees, including a person like the popular Jamshed Nasarvanji Mehta, who had been the Mayor of Karachi.

Study of Sanskrit

The Swami in charge of the Ashrama before I took over had started Sanskrit classes in Sindhi schools. Sanskrit was not taught in Sind. The Sindhis had completely neglected Sanskrit because they were influenced by Persian, Arabic and western culture, along with some aspects of popular Hinduism and the teachings of Guru Nanak and the next four Sikh Gurus. So, our Ashrama started encouraging the study of Sanskrit by appointing Sanskrit teachers to various schools by collecting funds from the public to pay the salaries of the teachers, first one school, then another, and so on. I continued this work and almost all the schools got Sanskrit teachers, and Hindu students began to study Sanskrit in place of Persian. In 1942 when I went, among the final year students of the school only one student had taken Sanskrit and all the rest Persian. But in 1946 before the advent of Pakistan, only one student had taken Persian and the rest had taken Sanskrit. People began to understand the greatness of Sanskrit and take more and more interest in the books in that language which was further strengthened by the classes on the *Gita*. Sales of Tilak's *Gita Rahasya*, the *Mahabharata*, and Ramakrishna-Vivekananda-Vedanta literature increased month after month.

After he was arrested in 1942, Gandhiji went on a fast in the jail. So, in Karachi, the Merchant's Chamber decided to have a prayer meeting for the sake of Gandhiji's health. But they were hesitant. After some discussion, they took courage and decided to have the meeting and they requested me to address the meeting. I agreed and I was the only speaker. About three-fourth of the big hall was full of merchants and political

workers of Karachi. That one lecture seemed to have influenced them as they were all drawn to our Ashrama.

Food for Famine Victims

Later on, I could see the result of it; a year later, came the Bengal famine of 1943, due to war-time British commercial policy, and millions of people died in Bengal. People in Karachi read the news published in the papers with pictures. So one day, some merchants and I sat together and decided to appeal for funds to provide relief. Our Mission Ashrama sent out an appeal for funds and the merchants responded generously and quickly; the result was that they collected nearly Rs. 5 lakhs within a short time. But money had no value in Bengal; it was food that they needed. So, we requested the Sind Government to give us an export permit for about 2000 tons of rice. The officer said, 'We shall give you, but wait a little. The Muslim League also wants export permit, and, after they come and take their quota, we shall give you your quota.' I said, 'O.K., I shall wait.'

After a short time, the officer told me, 'They came, they could collect only a small amount and they wanted only 60 tons of rice to give relief to the Muslim sufferers in Bengal. All the rest is yours.' We purchased about 1240 tons of rice with the money collected by us. Our Mission's relief was for all sufferers without distinction of caste or creed. We engaged a special steamer, free of charge, to take this large quantity of rice from Karachi to Calcutta via Sri Lanka. About one month later, it reached Calcutta and I was informed about it by the Mission Headquarters by wire. Telegrams took one week to reach from Calcutta to Karachi in those days. So, all the relief camps became full of this Karachi rice.

The Mission had done fire-relief work in Sukkur town in Sind in the 1930s. Sind

was then under the Bombay Presidency. The Ramakrishna Mission branch at Bombay had sent workers and done fire-relief work in the Sukkur town in north Sind efficiently. After the Bengal famine, serious communal trouble took place in Noakhali in the present Bangladesh. In response to our appeal for funds, the Sindhis contributed about Rs. 2 lakhs for relief work.

Spirit of Social Service

One thing I have seen in Sind—there were many social service organizations, here, there, everywhere, and the spirit of service was widespread among the Hindus of Sind.

I was asked to speak at a Communist Party meeting (The Peoples' War Group at that time) on Lenin's birthday on 21 January. The party usually got an audience of only 20 or 30. So, they wanted me. I said, 'Certainly I shall come and speak. I have studied Lenin.' So, I spoke. The Khaliqdina Hall, which was like a Town Hall at that time, was three-fourth full that day. They were happy.

Dealing with political corruption and the *āyā rām - gayā rām* mentality of Sind at that time, one of the newspapers of Karachi commented in a verse:

A Merciful Providence made us all
hollow
That we our principles might swallow!

Dr. Radhakrishnan's Visit

I felt a desire that the people of Karachi should hear the great scholar, Dr. Radhakrishnan. So, I invited Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Vice-Chancellor, Benaras Hindu University, to visit Karachi for a few days. He agreed but wanted me to collect at least Rs. 50,000 for his University. I agreed, and he came. He was my guest and he spoke at the D.J. Sind College and at our Ashrama, which were attended by many hundreds of people. We

collected the money and gave it to him for the University. In those days, the flight from India to England was only from Karachi. From that time, every time he went to England for his Oxford lectures, he would stay with us in the Ashrama for a day or two while going and while returning.

I travelled on lecture tours all over Sind, like Sukkur, Shikarpur, Nawabshah, Hyderabad and Larkana. Once in two weeks, I used to go to Hyderabad (Sind) for lectures. Everywhere there was good response from the people because almost all the Hindus knew English and many were eager to know about the higher dimensions of Hinduism.

Question: *After India's partition, when Sind came under Pakistan from August 1947, what problems had you to face? How did you adjust yourself to them? And what services did you render to the non-Muslim migrants leaving Karachi for India, and why and how did you close your mission branch in Karachi?*

Answer: This is a very interesting question. I was in Karachi for six years, half of which was during the Second World War. I reached there on the day the Quit India Movement was started and Gandhiji and other leaders were arrested in Bombay. Pakistan became an independent state on 14 August 1947. There were two prominent newspapers in English published from Karachi. One was called the *Sind Observer*, very popular, with Sri K. Punnaiah¹ as the editor, and the other was the *Daily Gazette*, with Sri M.S.M. Sharma as the editor. Sri Sharma asked me to contribute a special article to his paper's commemoration issue on the birth of Pakistan. That article entitled, 'Swami Vivekananda and the Future of India', was published in the *Daily Gazette* on the morning of 15 August 1947. That article finds a

place now in the second volume of my four-volume book *Eternal Values for a Changing Society*, published by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai 7. Here is a brief passage from that article (1985: pp. 215–6):

...The people are one whether under one sovereign state or two. And, as such, there will always be a large India looming behind the states of India and Pakistan. That India is found to impinge itself on the social constitutions and on the political states of the two parts of divided India....

The pressure of politics has divided us.... When the abnormalities of the present situation with its gushing passions and blinding hates will pass away leaving the Indian sky clear, the country will recognize the correctness and cogency of the above faith and vision; the faith of a steady few will then become the enthusiasm of the many, leading to a reconciliation and reunion of the sundered parts and the unsettling of a settled fact through popular will.

This is written in that book as a rational prediction and we have seen what happened later on—Bangladesh became separated and the two-nation theory based on religion was blasted; it is being blasted even now in the remaining Pakistan.

In the first year of Pakistan, a rumour spread in Karachi about Pakistan President Jinnah's Id prayer speech. He had committed to memory a passage in Arabic from the Koran. Thousands had assembled for this first Id prayer in Pakistan in the Id grounds. And, after prayer, President Jinnah addressed the gathering reciting that Arabic passage.

After he had finished, he turned to Pakistan Minister Abul Rab Nishtar sitting near, and asked him, 'Have I done that damned thing correctly?'

Since the microphone was still on, the

1. Elder brother of the late Sri K. Rama Rao, Editor of *National Herald*, Lucknow, founded by Pandit Nehru.

whole audience heard it. Fortunately, they did not know that the 'damned thing' was a passage from the Koran!

Among the Muslims who occasionally attended the Sunday *Gita* lectures at the Ashrama was a Sindhi, Sri A.K. Brohi, who was a prominent scholar and lawyer who later defended Sheikh Mujibur Rahman of Bangladesh and became in the fifties the High Commissioner of Pakistan in Delhi. He was also Law Minister of Pakistan for some time. At Delhi, after presenting his credential to the President of India, he came to the Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi, of which I was the Secretary from 1949 to 1962, and said, 'Swamiji, my next submission of credentials is to you!' That year he spoke on Swami Vivekananda's birthday at the Delhi Ramakrishna Mission. A previous speaker had spoken that Swami Vivekananda was the great leader of the nineteenth century. Sri Brohi said, at the beginning of his speech, that the speaker was not correct, Vivekananda was not the leader of the nineteenth century only, but he is the leader for all time!

Later on, he resigned his ambassadorial post because he had come, as he told me, with a view to establishing friendship between India and Pakistan, for which he did not get encouragement from his country's government. Later on, I met him once at the Karachi airport when I was returning from Athens to Delhi, and the plane had to stop at Karachi; he had somehow got the news, and he came to the airport and welcomed me. We spent an hour in the visitors' room and then he took me back and made me sit in my seat in the plane and we took leave of each other. A few years ago he passed away.

Replacement of Hindu Employees

With the advent of Pakistan began a large migration of people. Every day, in the offices, there was replacement of Hindus by Muslims from India. When I went with

Swami Sarvagatananda, who is now in Boston Ramakrishna Vedanta Society, to the General Post Office in Karachi to send some money to our Belur Math Headquarters, we did not see the Hindus who were there before. As soon as we entered, the Superintendent, who was a Muslim, stood up with folded hands and asked us with politeness and devotion, 'What can I do for you?' I said, 'We have come for this cheque to be cleared. It has to be sent to Calcutta.' He said, 'I am very happy to see these ochre robes. I was in Almora where I used to see many monks. Here at least, I could see you two.' He was full of devotion and respect and everything we wanted he did in a few minutes. Now this kind of mutual love and respect is something wonderful.

Our Ashrama was thoroughly looted on 6 January 1948 by Muslim migrants from India, not by the Sindhi Muslims. No harm was, however, done to the few of our monastic brothers living in the Ashrama; they were taken by a Bengali Muslim migrant to his home and they moved to a Hindu friend's house later.

Back in Karachi

I was in Bombay on that day, 6 January, addressing a Labour meeting at Sion for the Congress Socialist Party of Bombay. Next day, I went to Calcutta. There I got the news that our Ashrama had been looted and that nobody was harmed. I immediately flew back to Karachi and visited the Ashrama and saw all our library books thrown here and there. We cleaned up the whole thing and presented all our library books to the Pakistan Socialist Party library, which had a loving and efficient worker there—Sri Pratap Shah who was devoted to Sri Jai Prakash Narayan and belonged to his group. So, Pratap Shah became a good friend of the Ashrama and helped us in various ways. Later, he settled down in Edinburgh in Scotland. I first stayed in the Hindu

friend's house with our other monastic brothers and later shifted to the spacious dispensary building handed over to us by a Sindhi friend on his migration to India. Our doctor had gone back to India. We had no doctor. One Muslim doctor by name Dr. Kidwai, with his wife and son, came from Karol Bagh, Delhi, as a refugee and he was in search of a job. We appointed him with salary as our doctor; not only did we give him a job, but also a quarters next to ours to live in. In the meantime, we had sent away to India some of our excess monastic workers, including Swami Ananyananda who went to work in the Mission's Kurukshetra Relief camp for the Sikh and the Hindu refugees coming from Pakistan, Punjab. Only three were left at the Karachi Ashrama: Swami Sarvagatananda, the late Swami Bhavyananda (for long in charge of our Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre in England), and myself. Soon, we sent away our cook also to India. Dr. Kidwai's wife cooked and fed us and her family for one month. The Kidwai family was very cultured and non-communal.

One Muslim League leader of Agra had come to Karachi as a refugee with his family. He could not get a place to live in. He knew Sri Sri Prakasa, then Indian High Commissioner in Karachi. He requested Sri Sri Prakasa to ask the Swami to give him accommodation in our Ashrama to live in just for a month. On Sri Prakasaji's recommendation, we allowed him to occupy the Ashrama for one month. But the man refused to go after a month—one month, two months, three months passed. He claimed his right as a Muslim in Pakistan to stay on. But with the help of Pakistan Minister for Refugees, Ghazanfar Ali Khan, we got him out of the Ashrama and appointed a faithful Pathan Muslim to guard the Ashrama. We restarted our weekly lectures, but in the Theosophical Society Hall. After some time, the security conditions began to worsen day by

day, with killings here and there. We first decided to stop work in Karachi and depart for India. But a delegation headed by Professor Haleem, previously of the Aligarh Muslim University, and now the Vice-Chancellor of Sind University, came to meet me. He had asked me to prepare syllabi for various courses. There were no intellectuals available at that time. So, with the help of a small number of Hindus and Muslims, we drew up the syllabi. I was preparing to settle down in the present place—dispensary—and continue with our cultural activities. Then, Dr. Radhakrishnan, when he saw the conditions in Karachi, told the Belur Math Headquarters, 'Don't keep Swamiji there, he cannot do anything; it is always very high tension in Karachi; he can do much more useful work in India.' So, the Belur Math wrote to me to wind up the Karachi Ashrama as soon as possible and return to India. I then set about doing the same as energetically as I had done to continue the Ashrama work.

In the meantime, many problems were coming up as a result of the Partition. First of all, many young RSS people were being arrested by the Government. We started collecting money for them. Sri Pratap Shah helped me very much in these activities. At midnight, we took them to the Port and put them in the ship and sent them to Bombay.

There was another problem to tackle. During the British war period, they had brought to Karachi over 700 to 800 Harijan sweepers from Tamil Nadu. After Pakistan was established, they had become helpless. And from Tamil Nadu and Kerala, many muslims had come to Karachi as refugees and they were trying to convert these Harijan sweepers to Islam and keep them in Pakistan. Sri Pratap Shah got this information, and after discussing the matter with me, he went to them and arranged for their migration to Bombay. So, at midnight, we arranged to take all of them by ship to Bombay.

The then Chief Minister of Madras, Sri P.S. Kumaraswami Raja, had sent an officer with enough money to Bombay to get them tickets to go to their respective places. After they had returned to their homes, the Chief Minister wrote to me a nice letter thanking me for our service.

Just at that time, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, known as Frontier Gandhi, came to Karachi. I was meeting him for the first time. I was very much impressed by him. He was a true Muslim, majestic, service-oriented, courageous, but gentle like a lamb. He desired to spend a few days in a quiet place. So, I gave the Clifton Beach School for him and his friends for a month's stay. Later on, he was arrested by the Pakistan Government. For years, he was in jail and later he passed away, after visiting India once. Later I read his two books, *Thrown to the Wolves* and *Autobiography* while I was in Kabul in 1973.

One Muslim friend came forward to purchase all our Ashrama land and building, two newly purchased neighbouring lands, the Clifton Beach School, and two cars which Hindu refugees had left with me while migrating to India. We sent all the money to Belur Math, nearly Rs. 4½ lakhs, and the car sale money to their owners in Poona and Mangalore.

Then, we attended a farewell meeting organized by the Pakistan Socialist Party. After that we left for Delhi exactly on the day on which I had reached Karachi—on 9 August 1948. Altogether I was five years in Indian Karachi and one year in Pakistani Karachi.

When I left Karachi, we had two young Sindhi Muslims and one Pathan Muslim to serve the Ashrama. I gave them some presents, some extra money, and they wept when we left. This is briefly the story of my years in Karachi. □

The way to steady and purify the mind is to retire into solitude, control all cravings, and engage yourself in contemplation and meditation. The more you occupy the mind with holy thoughts, the greater will be your spiritual unfoldment. Just as a cow yields greater quantities of milk when she is well fed, so when the mind is offered spiritual food, it will yield greater tranquillity. Spiritual food consists of meditation, prayer, contemplation and japam.

Another means of steadying the mind is to let it wander, but keep watch over its workings. After some time the mind gets tired and comes back to find peace in God. If you watch your mind, the mind in turn will keep watch over you....

Struggle, struggle. If a man does not struggle to realize God, he remains buried in ignorance. Accept these struggles boldly. Welcome them. Through them you will find peace.

—*The Eternal Companion: Spiritual Teachings of Swami Brahmananda*, pp. 143–4

Harmonizing World Views on Consciousness

PROF. HUSTON SMITH

Prof. Huston Smith, Professor Emeritus in Philosophy from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and subsequently Thomas J. Watson Professor of Religions and distinguished Professor of Philosophy at Syracuse University in New York State, is a widely known author and one of the most respected and renowned students of religion in our times. His best known and widely distributed work is his classic, The Religions of Man (now The World's Religions).

What follows is the text of his speech delivered at the conference, 'In Search of Consciousness', sponsored by AHIMSA (Agency for Human Interconnectedness through Manifestation of Spiritual Awareness) and held on 10 September 1994. A few of the other speeches delivered at this conference and at the subsequent conference (in 1995) will appear in the pages of this journal. Readers of Prabuddha Bharata may in this connection recall that the first AHIMSA conference was held in 1993; some of the speeches delivered in it appeared in Prabuddha Bharata, 1996, pp. 420, 494.

About the title of my talk to you this morning, certainly as I came close to it to think out what I would say, it sounded too ambitious to me, maybe even pretentious. For sure, I am not going to be able to harmonize the world's views on consciousness, but for getting into the issues that face us in this conference I think it is very good and so I'll use it as the means of getting into the issues as I see them.

My summary sentence is that it would be very easy—no trick at all—to harmonize the world's views and what they say about consciousness were it not for *us*. The reason for this is that Descartes defined consciousness for the modern West in a way that is highly idiosyncratic, a way that is at odds with the way other people all over the world and in all times other than ours have conceived it. So let me describe these views of consciousness. I shall call ours the modern western view, and its alternative the traditional view, and then go on to ask what we might make of the present situation.

The presiding feature of the modern

western view of consciousness is its Cartesian premise that there are two completely different and irreconcilable kinds of reality, the physical and the mental. In the words of an anonymous limerick:

There once was a man named Descartes
Who thought he was terribly smart,
Saying matter and mind
are of opposite kind,
Thus keeping them ever apart.

The traditional view differs from Descartes' in the beginning in that it did not define matter and mind so differently that an external agent, namely God, had to be invoked to account for their interaction. In opposition, the traditional view held that human beings are, by their very nature embodied minds. There are many orders of reality in the traditional world, many kinds of existence, but human beings, and indeed all living things as we know them, are compounds of two distinguishable, to be sure, elements (or better, aspects), but these are so pervasively interactive that neither would be itself without the other. The conformity

of this to our everyday experience would go without saying were we not ourselves schooled materialistically toward this question. For it seems obvious when we think about it, that doing something physical—jogging or making an omelet, for example,—when after getting the idea of what we want to do, we go about doing it with our hands or our feet, our conscious mind is the initiator and director of what our bodies do. On the other hand, if we have a headache, swallowing some aspirin will either make it disappear, or at least hurt less. Here our bodies seem clearly to affect the nature of our conscious state. The state of our bodies can impair, as well as help, our states of consciousness. If we consume alcohol we get drunk, and we find the ability of our minds to direct our bodies is severely affected by that. We can't walk a straight line; we may even stagger or fall down, our speech becomes slurred and our minds unable to think clearly. If we drink enough of it we may suffer a total blackout, remembering nothing of the incident the following morning, but the painful hangover we have leaves no doubt that mind and body do most intimately interact and suffer in unity.

Now, building on our common sense notion that human beings are embodied minds, neither of which could be what it is without the other, our so-called mind-body problem is of no particular importance to any classical philosopher, be he Hindu, Buddhist, or neo-Confucian, or whatever. To speak only of the West, from at least the days of Egypt right up to Descartes, the West invariably posited that each human being has a soul which is its active vitalizing principle and a body which was only alive by virtue of having a soul connected to it. The soul or mind was the source of awareness, thought, and feeling, and the body was the vehicle of the soul, the means by which it interacted with other people and the world. No one questioned that the mind could in-

fluence the body because it was evident to common sense that it did so. A significant corollary of the view was that since the soul was the vital half of the combination, the death of the body did not necessitate the death of the soul; and the latter might in fact be immortal. But as long as soul and body were joined, they formed a substantive unity and fully interacted with each other.

Now to summarize this traditional view: the interaction between body and mind poses no more of a problem than the interaction between myself and the world. I can chop down a tree. Conversely, a tree can fall on me and possibly kill me. But it is equally obvious that though the mutual interdependence and interaction of body and mind is the definition of the living things we directly know, it does not mean however that it is not possible for the two to become separated. Corpses provide traditionalists with instances of bodies without minds, and shamanic journeys and certain kinds of dreams suggest that minds could on occasion disengage from their bodies. So we have these two irreconcilable views, the modern and the traditional. What are we to make of the situation: this dichotomy between consciousness as it figures in the modern and in the traditional views?

The 'kneejerk answer' does not go very well for harmonizing the two views. The kneejerk answer of course is to say that *we are right* and *they are wrong*. There is reason to question that chauvinistic answer, for our current western world view has problems. It has had problems from the very start, some of which are so severe as to make one wonder when one thinks about it whether it is even a logically coherent position! Now the foremost of these problems is the question of how entities as different as body and mind (as Descartes made them out to be) can interact with each other. Every major philosopher and psychologist of the last four

centuries: Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant, Hegel, Russell, Whitehead, Dewey—every major philosopher, has tried to crack that nut without seeming to make a dent on it. The logically possible ways of solving the problem are limited. Briefly, at the two extremes are idealism and materialism, both of which get around the interaction headache by denying that there are two things to interact. Idealism says that there is only mind. Materialism says there is only matter. Both of these are moods of desperation for being very counter-intuitive, which is to say they fly egregiously into the face of our common sense experience. To think that the US Air jet that crashed a few days ago was an idea; to think that it was 'thought' in the shape of the plane's cabin that collided with the ground and crushed the life of its passengers—all that is pretty fantastic. And we would find it equally fantastic to think that our thought, feelings, sensations, and emotions are material objects (however refined and subtle and sophisticated these objects are), were it not for the fact that our culture has made materialists of all of us to some degree. So that absurdity seems less absurd than the idealistic one. John S--- of our faculty, who I regret isn't with us today, has given as much thought to these issues as anybody on our campus, has done the service in his recent book: *The Re-discovery of Mind*, of pointing out that the properties of mind are not the properties of matter that we now know. But he does then go on to conclude that they must therefore be properties of matter that we do *not* know. So his materialistic bias creeps in after he has made this first and very important statement. It is still materialism, but at least the view like his allows that matter may be richer than we now understand it to be. And that is an important possibility.

Between the extremes of idealism and materialism we have Spinoza's parallelism: that mind and body are like railroad tracks,

always the two are found together, but causation is always along one track—mental causation on one track and physical causation on the other track. And there are Whitehead's Pen-psychism, and Teilhard's somewhat different version of it. In these we have a middle position between the two extremes, and that is really all the story as far as the possibilities we can think of go.

That none of these attempts to get 'Humpty-Dumpty back together again' (after Descartes pushed him off the wall), have been successful enough to carry the day was clearly evident at a symposium by the CIBA Foundation in London two years ago. The twenty-eight participants were all leading philosophers, neurobiologists, and cognitive scientists. The most recurrent theme in that symposium was the attempt to explain how consciousness is related to the physical processes of the brain. The participants brought an impressive array of theoretical and empirical insights to the problem, nevertheless it is fair to say that after three days of exchange between so many brilliant minds with all of the cutting edge of their sophisticated discipline, the fundamental problem not only remained unresolved, but there was not even a consensus on how it could be resolved. Some even doubted that within the current western world view it can be resolved. One went so far as to say:

It might be thought that the present differences in kind between mental and physical will be closed by future physics and psychological discoveries of some sort of bridge between the mental and the physical, but it must be admitted that this is a pipe dream. All that we can expect from future research is a more precise determination of the mental and physical events involved. We will still be left with the basic difference in time between some sort of mental event on the one hand and some sort of physical event on

the other and that would still leave us with the problem of how such different sorts of events could affect each other.

That three centuries have not been able to solve these problems suggests that indeed they may not be solvable within the current western paradigm. This should make us interested in looking outside our current paradigm. Actually Thomas Nagle made precisely this point in his opening address to the London symposium that I just referred to. He said:

Even the apparent impossibility of discovering a transparent internal connection between the physical and the mental should give us hope. Apparent impossibilities are a wonderful stimulus to the theoretical imagination.

And he continues:

I think it is inevitable that the pursuit of such an account will lead to an alteration of our concept of the physical world. Unless conscious points of view can be subjected to outright physical reduction, it will not be possible to understand how they necessarily arise in certain kinds of physical systems described only in terms of contemporary physics and chemistry. In the long run therefore, physiological psychology should expect cosmological results. This should be surprising since physical science has not tried heretofore to take on consciousness. When it does the effort will transform it radically.

That is a little dense, so let me summarize: Prof. Nagle is saying that unless it is shown that consciousness is nothing but physical and chemical states, as physics and chemistry are now understood (and he does not think that kind of reductionism is going to happen), then to the extent that physiological psychology succeeds in explaining

consciousness, it will transform our understanding of what physical and chemical events are.

Now, as a prelude to such an understanding of what physical and chemical events are, or more generally, of what body and mind consist of, it would be useful, I think, to turn again to Descartes' conception of the two as absolutely opposite and deconstruct that notion. By deconstruct, I mean simply to go back and look at the historical causes that moved that idiosyncratic view of the situation into place. And now, here is where I should be precise, because this gets close to the real issue, I find myself so unclear in my own mind—I've wrestled with it for the past week, thinking of almost nothing else—that I'm simply going to suggest a couple of pointers that I think are relevant to this matter of deconstructing the Cartesian notion. The most important one would be to keep very much in mind that the reason he came to this idiosyncratic view was because of the dawning of modern science at that time. And what his attention to what was going on there did (the effect it had on his view) (in effect, metaphorically speaking), was he put a strainer through the body-mind 'mix' and lifted out precisely on the matter-side those features that we can get our hands on and control, because this was what science was bent on doing.

Now, I'm not discounting the pure science: the wonder of the world and nature that has issued from it. That was all there, but I think there is no question but that the guiding animus was that 'here we can control', here we can control nature. And without having worked it out, what I suspect is that the primary qualities that the strainer came up with: size, shape, extension, are all objective qualities because they connect at some level of amplification with our senses. They are all objective qualities and they are

(Continued on page 744)

Swami Brahmananda

SWAMI CHETANANANDA

(Continued from previous issue)

As President of the Ramakrishna Order

Undoubtedly, the passing away of Vivekananda was a great blow to the monks; but Brahmananda came forward to hold the helm of the Ramakrishna Mission with his vast experience and strong common sense, with unselfish love and unbounded compassion, and above all with the personality of a spiritual giant. He could read a person's character at a glance, and he guided the monks accordingly. He told them: 'Give the whole of your mind to God. If there is no waste of mental energy, with a fraction of your mind you can do so much work that the world will be dazed.'

As head of the organization, Brahmananda boldly and calmly faced problem after problem. On 14 July 1902 Turiyananda arrived in Belur Math from America, and the news of Swamiji's passing broke his heart. Brahmananda and Saradananda received him warmly. Swami Trigunatitananda who had been editing and managing the *Udbodhan* magazine, which had been started by Swamiji, was sent to San Francisco in place of Turiyananda. The magazine was passing through a financial crisis. Brahmananda made Swami Shuddhananda editor, and came forward to rescue the journal by raising money and collecting articles from devotees. He himself wrote an article in Bengali entitled 'Guru' and began to contribute Sri Ramakrishna's teachings serially.

After Swamiji's passing away Sister Nivedita became involved in India's freedom movement. Brahmananda and

Saradananda explained to her that the Ramakrishna Order had no connection with politics, so she had to choose either to be a member of the freedom movement or of the Ramakrishna Order. She chose the former. But Brahmananda was always affectionate towards her and helpful in her educational work. He asked her to write a biography of Swamiji, which was later published as *The Master as I Saw Him*.

Brahmananda was more interested in building the character of the members of the Order than in framing rules and regulations that would restrict the monks' freedom. He knew from his experience that religion finds its fulfilment in love and freedom. On the other hand, no organization can function without some guidelines. While framing some rules for the Ramakrishna Math at Alambazar, Vivekananda had said: 'Look here, we are going to make rules, no doubt; but we must remember the main object thereof. Our main object is to transcend all rules and regulations. We naturally have some bad tendencies which are to be changed by observing good rules and regulations, and finally we have to go beyond even all these, just as we remove one thorn by another and throw both of them away.'

Kumud Bandhu Sen, a lay devotee, told the following incident, which took place in his presence:

A meeting of the disciples of Ramakrishna had been called at Balaram Basu's house. Probably the year was 1897. The purpose was to consider or-

ganizational matters concerned with the new association. Swamiji had brought a proposed table of detailed regulations of conduct. He passed it out for all to study. All considered it carefully, and each except Maharaj made comments, suggested changes, and gave approval. But Maharaj remained silent.

Then Swamiji asked: 'Raja, what is the matter? Why don't you say something? Don't you like it?' Maharaj replied: 'No, Naren. I don't like so many rules and regulations.' Then Swamiji took the draft of that section and without a word just tore it up and threw the pieces away.

At Alambazar monastery Swamiji dictated twenty-four rules to Swami Shuddhananda for the guidance of the newly-admitted brahmacharins; and he framed the general rules at Nilambar Babu's garden house at Belur, which were recorded by Swami Shivananda.

'One morning at Belur Math,' wrote Swami Basudevananda, 'these rules of the Ramakrishna Order were read aloud in Swami Brahmananda's room. The revered swami was seated on his small cot absorbed in deep meditation. Swami Shuddhananda was the reader. When the reading was over, Brahmananda said: "Swamiji did not utter these rules from the physical plane; he raised his mind to a higher realm and then gave dictation and Tarak-da [Swami Shivananda] wrote them down. He delineated them with a view to spreading the ideas and ideals of Sri Ramakrishna and for the good of humanity. Everyone, whether man or woman, rich or poor, high or low, has an equal right to the spiritual heritage and service of Sri Ramakrishna. Blessed is he who serves the Master and follows his teachings! Accept those instructions of Swamiji with candid faith; practise them in your lives and then spread them in all directions. As a result you will see that the evil influence of the dark age

will diminish and the golden age will come in sight.'"

On another occasion, Swami Dhirananda asked Brahmananda to make some rules for the young monks. He replied: 'Swamiji has already made the rules for us. We do not need to add any new ones. Add more love, attain more devotion, and help others to move towards the ideal of God.' Swami Abhedananda remarked about Brahmananda: 'Love was the dominant theme of his character. As the first president of the Ramakrishna Order he enforced no other law but love; and by that sheer force of love he could dominate over one and all.'

Brahmananda seldom attended the trustee meetings of the Order, as most of the time he was away from the monastery. Saradananda, the general secretary, managed the day-to-day administration with Brahmananda's approval and consultation. Even when Brahmananda was in Belur Math, he was reluctant to attend the meetings. One day a trustee, a disciple of Swamiji, asked him: 'Maharaj, why do you make such difficulty about attending the meetings?' The swami answered: 'Look, the whole world appears shadowlike to me. It is very difficult for me to come and attend to all these details.'

'Nevertheless,' wrote Swami Ashokananda, 'he was very alert about what was going on in the Order. How he knew all the things that were taking place nobody could find out; but he knew. And sometimes he could be very embarrassing. Say you had just come to him from another centre; he would ask you, 'Well, how is the cow doing? How is the calf? Was there a good harvest in the vegetable garden? How is the orchard? How many mangoes were there this season?' I remember he once asked me about a cow and a calf. I felt so embarrassed because I could not give him a right answer at all. He

knew everything, kept watch over everything — not only the details of the external work, but the spiritual condition of the monks as well. He could guide them, and he would give those who were earnest as much help as they wanted.'

Once Saradananda said to a young monk: 'When I say something, you should judge and discriminate whether I am right or wrong, but when Maharaj says something you may safely accept that as true without the slightest doubt.'

In Northern India

During his presidency, Brahmananda travelled extensively in various parts of India to organize the activities of the Order. In the middle of 1903 he went to Varanasi and stayed there for a month. He collected some funds to help the Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama, which was struggling financially. A few young devotees of Swamiji had started the 'Poor Men's Relief Association,' which later became the 'Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service.' Brahmananda officially affiliated the group with the Order and arranged to buy some land adjacent to the Home of Service and to construct some buildings on it. He then went to Kankhal (Hardwar), where Swami Kalyanananda, a disciple of Swamiji, had started to serve sick monks in three thatched huts. With the help of a Calcutta devotee, Brahmananda arranged to buy fifteen acres of land at Kankhal, and he sent Vijnanananda to supervise the construction of some buildings.

Although he was the head of a large organization, karma could not bind him. Whenever he had time and opportunity he would practise sadhana in one of his four favourite holy places: Varanasi, Kankhal, Vrindaban, and Puri. As a true mystic, he could monitor the time when the spiritual current flows in those places. He said: 'Each place has its own time, when it is favourable

for spiritual disciplines. The auspicious time in Vrindaban is midnight; in Varanasi, from 3:00 a.m. to dawn; in Puri, afternoon; in Bhubaneswar and Belur Math at 4:00 a.m.'

About Kankhal he remarked: 'It is a holy place. Here it does not take much effort to be absorbed in japam and meditation. The very atmosphere is wonderful. The presence of the Mother Ganges and the majestic Himalayas make the mind calm spontaneously. The unobstructed sound of Om is always vibrating in the air.' He said about Varanasi: 'Kashi [Varanasi] is beyond the universe — a great place saturated with consciousness. A person gets ten times the results if he practises spiritual disciplines here, and the mantram becomes living very quickly.'

After staying one month at Kankhal, Maharaj went to Vrindaban and practised sadhana with Turiyananda. During this time, Brahmananda recalled how a spirit helped his steadfast devotions:

At that time Turiyananda and I were living together and practising japam and meditation punctually. We did not talk to each other unless we needed to. At 8:00 p.m. we would eat some bread that we got from begging, and then go to bed. Just at midnight we would get up, and after washing we would sit for meditation. One night while I was asleep, I was pushed by someone and heard a voice: 'It is twelve. Will you not sit for meditation?' I immediately got up and was a little groggy. I thought that Turiyananda had broken my sleep, but he informed me that he did not. Quickly I finished washing and sat for meditation. I saw a Babaji (a Vaishnava saint) repeating his mantram silently in front of me. Seeing him I was a little scared. I was repeating my mantram and from time to time I would look at him. As long as I was seated on my carpet, I saw him standing,

repeating his mantram. Later I used to see him daily in the same way repeating his mantram.

'One day in Vrindaban,' Swami Ambikananda recalled, 'I accompanied Maharaj to the temple of Radharaman. Expert musicians gather there every day in the prayer hall and worship the deity with devotional songs. Maharaj introduced me to the musicians and said, "This boy likes to sing the praises of the Lord." This pleased them. They let me sing and accompanied me with drums and cymbals. Everyone liked my singing, and one of the priests brought a basket of sweets for Maharaj and said to him, "I shall send this basket to your cottage." Maharaj looked at me, pleased, and remarked, "See what a nice present I get for your singing!"'

It is a great education to live with a God-intoxicated person. From Vrindaban Brahmananda went to Vindhyaachal via Allahabad. Ambikananda later reminisced:

The first night Maharaj, my father, our host, and I slept in the same room. It was nearing midnight when I felt a gentle touch. I woke up. I saw Maharaj dressed and covered with a heavy blanket. He said to me: 'Get up and dress yourself in warm clothing. I want you to come with me.' Without any hesitation I did as I was told, though it did not occur to me at the time to inquire where we were going. Maharaj took a lantern in one hand and a stick in the other, and asked me to follow him. We went outside. It was the night of the new moon and pitch-dark. The path was uneven. Realizing that I was stumbling, Maharaj gave me the lantern to carry and held me by the hand. I asked him then, 'Where are we going?' He replied, 'To see the Divine Mother.'

When we entered the (Vindyaivasini) temple compound we found the place

crowded with worshippers. Some were counting beads and others were chanting the praises of the Divine Mother. There was an intense spiritual atmosphere. The door of the temple was still closed. The priests were decorating Mother's image for the special occasion. When the doors opened, the pilgrims stood up and moved forward slowly to have the darshan [sight] of Mother. In the meantime the priests caught sight of Maharaj. Seeing his benign face and impressed by his personality, they stopped the pilgrims from proceeding and let Maharaj enter first. He was still holding my hand, and I was following him. When Maharaj stood before the image of the Divine Mother, he exclaimed: 'Ah! How beautiful, how beautiful!' The next moment he was in ecstasy. There was perfect silence in the temple. The priests and pilgrims watched Maharaj's God-intoxicated state in amazement. After a while, still in an ecstatic mood, Maharaj asked me to sing a song to the Divine Mother. While I was singing, tears of joy fell from the outer corners of his eyes. It was a divine sight to behold. Maharaj asked me to sing another song, after which we prostrated before Mother and came out into the courtyard. Maharaj sat down in one corner to perform japam and asked me to sit also. I said, 'What shall I do?' Maharaj replied: 'Think of the presence of Divine Mother. Later I shall instruct you.' We stayed for a while and returned to the house before daybreak.

Brahmananda visited Varanasi several times. In April 1908 he laid the foundation stone of the hospital building of the Home of Service. Again he went to Varanasi in 1912, and then in March he went to Kankhal and stayed until after autumn. He arranged to have Durga Puja (the annual worship of the Divine Mother) in the ashrama. He told a monk who was giving homoeopathic

medicine in the hospital: 'Look, my child, your work pertains to life and death. Don't be overconfident about your capability. When you give medicine, pray to Sri Ramakrishna, "Master, help me to select that medicine which will cure this patient." Then you will feel that the Master is working through you.' This was his last visit to Kankhal.

In November 1912 Holy Mother came to Varanasi with her retinue and stayed at a devotee's house near the two Ramakrishna centres. Brahmananda and other monks accompanied her to show the activities of the Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service. Greatly pleased with the visit, she remarked: 'Sri Ramakrishna is ever present in the place, and Mother Lakshmi always casts her benign glance upon it.' As a token of appreciation she gave a ten rupee note as a donation, which is still preserved in the centre.

Coincidentally, M. was then in Varanasi. He had often expressed the view that the Master did not approve of anyone's performing social service before realizing God, which caused ideological conflict among some monks. At Brahmananda's request, a monk said to M.: 'Mother has just told us that the activities of the Home of Service were service to the Master himself and that he was tangibly present here. Now what do you say?' M. replied with a laugh: 'How can I deny it anymore?'

Brahmananda had unbounded devotion to Holy Mother. He used to go every morning to pay his respects to her. Fearful of being overwhelmed with emotion, he would bow down to her from the courtyard instead of going upstairs where she was. One day Golap-ma said: 'Rakhal, the Mother asks why a devotee propitiates Shakti, the Divine Mother, at the beginning of worship?' Brahmananda replied: 'It is because the key to the knowledge of Brahman is in

the Divine Mother's keeping. There is no way of communing with Brahman unless She graciously unlocks the door.'

One day Holy Mother visited Sarnath, about seven miles from Varanasi, where Buddha had preached his first sermon after attaining nirvana. Swami Nikhilananda wrote:

Swami Brahmananda and three other devotees followed her in another carriage. The Mother went around the place looking at the various ruins associated with Buddha and his followers and noticed that several European visitors, too, were doing so. Referring to the visitors, she said: 'They built all this in a previous birth, and now they have come back again to see what they did centuries ago. They are speechless with wonder, admiring these amazing relics.' While returning to Varanasi, Holy Mother, at the earnest request of Brahmananda, exchanged carriages with him. On the road, the swami's carriage had an accident, though nobody was seriously hurt. When the Mother heard about it she said: 'I was fated for this mishap, but Rakhal, by force as it were, took it on his own shoulders. I had several children with me; who knows what would have happened to them?'

As a tree bends when it bears too much fruit, so a real spiritual person bends with humility. Brahmananda taught the monks through his life and actions. Swami Kamal-eswarananda recorded the following incident that Maharaj told him:

Once it arose in the Master's mind that if he could clean the privy, he would believe that his ego had gone. One night he translated his idea into action.

The other day I went to visit Lord Vishwanath with a few monks; I was

dressed in nice clothing and looked like a dignified 'Swami.' I saw a sweeper sweeping the courtyard of Vishwanath. I found an opportunity to test my humility. I approached the sweeper and asked him to give me his broomstick. I offered him a coin, because seeing that I was a monk he was reluctant to give it to me. I took the broomstick from his hand, and cleaned the Lord's place. For a couple of hours I got so much joy that I can't describe. My heart was full. There is an inexpressible joy in humility. I felt more joy cleaning the temple than visiting the deity.

Brahmananda had collected some teachings of Sri Ramakrishna in Bengali, which were first serially published in the *Udbodhan* and later translated into English under the title *Words of the Master*. During this visit to Varanasi he completed the book. When he was working on the manuscript of those teachings, he would not allow anybody to stay in his room. Sometimes Maharaj would get up at midnight and ask his attendant to bring the manuscript to him. Once, after correcting it, he said, 'The Master came and told me: "I didn't say that. I said this."' Saradananda wrote in his introduction to that book: 'The present brochure is from the pen of one who was regarded by the Master as next to Swami Vivekananda in his capacity for realizing religious ideals. It is indeed the work of grateful love of the beloved disciple — one who, more than anyone else, lived constantly with the Master — to set the Master correctly before the public, seeing how his invaluable words are being roughly handled, deformed, and distorted nowadays at the hands of many.'

Karma yoga is inscrutable. It is a wonderful path for purifying the mind; but if it is not performed in the right spirit, it breeds ego, power struggles, bickering, and dissension. In Varanasi the Ramakrishna Advaita

Ashrama and the Home of Service are located side by side; some untrained monks of both centres once formed rival groups and started to quarrel among themselves. Turiyananda and Saradananda tried to reconcile their differences but failed. When Brahmananda was informed of the situation at Bhubaneswar, he replied: 'Don't do anything. I am coming to see for myself.'

On 20 January 1921 Brahmananda arrived at Varanasi. The novices were scared to death, thinking that the swami would punish them, or at least call some meetings. He did not call any meeting or raise any question regarding work or quarrels. He simply announced that all the monks from both centres would have to meditate with him in the morning and evening, and that there would be devotional singing and questions and answers after meditation. Thus a few days passed. Then, on Swamiji's birthday he initiated forty members of the ashramas into sannyasa and brahmacharya. He lifted their minds to such a high level that they forgot all their friction. One of the ring-leaders was so inspired that he left for the Himalayas to perform austerities. Peace returned to both centres.

Seeing that Brahmananda had won the battle without a fight, Saradananda complimented him: 'It would be proper for you to be a king rather than a monk. Where both Turiyananda and I could not figure out the solution, how easily you solved this crucial problem!' A disciple of Brahmananda wrote in his reminiscences:

Maharaj had the power to change the atmosphere of a place and to make it vibrate with his spirituality. In his company he could make everybody roll with laughter, and then suddenly, when he became silent, the place would be surcharged with a divine presence. Swami Turiyananda once remarked that Ma-

haraj used to create such an atmosphere around himself that everyone present would be filled with some of his spiritual mood. Many people used to come to Maharaj for the purpose of seeking advice about their problems. But once they were near him they felt no necessity to ask for any solution. Problems solved themselves in his presence, and people would forget themselves, their egoism, temporal pleasure and pain, and be filled with intense divine bliss.

During this last visit to Varanasi Brahmananda gave nine spiritual discourses to the monks, which are invaluable for seekers of God. The spiritual teachings of Brahmananda from 1897 to 1922 were first published in Bengali as *Dharma-prasange Swami Brahmananda*, and have been fully translated into English as *A Guide to Spiritual Life*. This book is a classic in practical Vedanta literature.

In South India

In 1897 Vivekananda had sent Ramakrishnananda to Madras to spread the message of the Master in South India. In 1908 Ramakrishnananda invited Brahmananda to visit, and went to Puri himself to escort him to Madras. Before leaving Madras, Ramakrishnananda told Sister Devamata (Laura Glenn, an American devotee) and Brahmachari Rudra to make everything ready to receive Maharaj. 'Remember,' he reiterated, 'Swami Brahmananda was like his own son and when you see him, you have a glimpse of what Sri Ramakrishna was. The self in Brahmananda is entirely annihilated. Whatever he says or does comes directly from the Divine Source.'

Ramakrishnananda accommodated Brahmananda in his room, which had been renovated especially for that purpose. He said: 'The Master and his son will stay inside. I will stay out in the entrance hall and

serve them. What more do I want?' He told the South Indian devotees: 'You have not seen the Master; be contented to see Maharaj.' One day a devotee brought some fruits for Ramakrishna, but Ramakrishnananda offered half to Maharaj, saying: 'To offer these fruits to Maharaj is as good as offering them to Sri Ramakrishna, for the Master eats through his mouth.' V. Krishnaswami Iyer asked Ramakrishnananda whether the new swami would give any lecture in Madras. Smiling, Ramakrishnananda replied: 'What is there in lectures? He never gives lectures. Men such as he can impart religion by a mere look or touch.'

Sister Devamata recorded some touching incidents about Brahmananda in her *Days in an Indian Monastery*:

Sometimes Swami Brahmananda's approval was wholly...unspoken. One day he laid in my hands a folded pongee shawl with the words: 'Sister, can you mend this for me? Some insect has eaten little holes all through it. I prized it because it was given me by Ram Babu [a devotee of Ramakrishna].' I took it home, tinted some sewing silk the exact shade and darned each little hole with meticulous care. It consumed the whole day and in the evening I sent the shawl back. Swami Brahmananda was delighted with it and showed it to everyone explaining that I had done it, but he never mentioned it to me. He did not wish to cheapen a loving service by an ordinary expression of thanks.

He sat on the rug at the far end of the hall, his body motionless, his eyes closed, a smile of ecstasy playing about his lips. Swami Ramakrishnananda was the first to observe that he did not move when the service was over. Realizing what had occurred, he motioned to one of the young swamis to fan his head.... For half an

hour no one stirred — a boy who was crossing the hall did not even draw back his foot. Perfect stillness pervaded the monastery — a radiant, pulsating stillness.

During Christmas time Brahmananda asked Sister Devamata to arrange a Christmas party in Western fashion. She could not get a Christmas tree, but she bought a plum cake, glace fruits, and other items from an English shop. The boys brought green branches from the jungle and bound them to the pillars in the hall and decorated the entrance with mango leaves and garlands. A Christmas altar was set up, and bread and wine were offered as a symbol of the Christian Eucharist. Sister Devamata narrated the event:

Swami Brahmananda asked me to read the story of Christ's birth and I chose the account of Saint Luke. When I finished reading, the intense stillness in the air led me to look towards Swami Brahmananda. His eyes were open and fixed on the altar, there was a smile on his lips, but it was evident that his consciousness had gone to a higher plane. No one moved or spoke. At the end of twenty minutes or more the look of immediate seeing returned to his eyes and he motioned to us to continue the service. Lights, incense and burning camphor were waved before the altar, the evening chant and hymn were sung, all those present bowed in silent prayer and the Christmas Service was ended.

As he was eating he remarked to me: 'I have been very much blessed in coming to your house today, Sister.' I answered quickly, 'Swami, it is I who have been blessed in having you come.' 'You do not understand,' he replied. 'I have had a great blessing here this afternoon. As you were reading the Bible, Christ suddenly stood before the altar dressed

in a long blue cloak. He talked to me for some time. It was a very blessed moment.

After staying some days in Madras, Brahmananda was accompanied by Ramakrishnananda on a pilgrimage in South India. First the swamis went to Rameswaram, on the coast of the Indian Ocean, and stayed three days as the guests of the Raja of Ramnad. After their arrival, both swamis went to visit Lord Shiva and then returned to the palace. Brahmananda scolded his attendants who were busy unpacking the luggage: 'Can't these things wait? You have come here to worship the Lord and that is what you should attend to first.' On the second day Brahmananda and Ramakrishnananda ceremoniously worshipped the Lord with Ganges water that Maharaj had brought from Varanasi.

From Rameswaram on the way to Madras they stopped at Madurai to visit the famous Meenakshi temple, and stayed three days in the city. Ramakrishnananda wanted to escort Maharaj to the inner sanctuary so that he could see the Mother closely. Customarily, only brahmins are allowed to enter there, and Brahmananda was born as a *kshatriya* (royal or warrior caste). At the entrance Ramakrishnananda shouted 'Alwar, Alwar,' (illuminated Vaishnava saint), and as a result the priests did not stop them. In the temple Brahmananda had a wonderful vision, which he later described: 'When I stood in front of the deity, I saw the living image of Mother Meenakshi coming towards me, and I lost outer consciousness.' Realizing that Maharaj was in ecstasy, Ramakrishnananda held him up for nearly an hour in the midst of a large crowd; and he himself chanted the glory of the Divine Mother with tearful eyes. Afterwards the swamis came out of the shrine. Then they returned to Madras. Ramakrishnananda took Brahmananda to Kanchipuram where

he visited Mother Kamakshi, Shiva and Vishnu, the famous deities.

On 20 January 1909 Brahmananda inaugurated the Ramakrishna Ashrama in Bangalore. It was a grand celebration. The high officials of the Mysore State attended the function. Brahmananda read his address, which made an excellent impression on the audience. This was the only time that Brahmananda ever spoke in public. In Bangalore Maharaj was so impressed with *Ramnam Sankirtan* (choral singing in praise of Lord Ramachandra), that he introduced it to the Order, and he himself would join in the singing.

Swami Umananda, a disciple of Brahmananda, was working in Madras. He became ill with smallpox and was admitted to the hospital, where Ramakrishnananda visited him every day. A couple of days before he passed away, Umananda expressed a desire to see Maharaj. When Ramakrishnananda communicated this to Brahmananda, he showed concern but did not go to the hospital, thinking that the disease might be contagious. After Umananda's death, Ramakrishnananda said with tearful eyes: 'Maharaj, you are so cruel! Umananda wanted to see you once in his final hours, and you did not go!' Immediately Maharaj became grave and then slowly said: 'Shashi, is it enough to see a person through the eyes? Have I not been there?' Ramakrishnananda bowed down and said: 'Maharaj, please forgive me, I did not understand you.'

Ramakrishnananda died in 1911. In July 1916 Brahmananda revisited South India. He laid the foundation stone of the new monastery building in Madras, and then went to Bangalore on 12 August. This time he extensively visited the important holy places of the South: Chamundeswari Devi in Mysore, Lord Padmanabha in Trivandrum,

Kanyakumari (the Virgin Goddess) at Cape Comorin, Perambudur (the birthplace of Ramanuja), Lord Ranganath at Trichi, and Lord Balaji Venkateshwara in Tirupati. When Brahmananda visited those holy places, the deities would manifest themselves to him. From time to time he would talk about his visions: 'In Kanyakumari, I was about to burst into laughter out of joy. I saw the goddess as an eight- or ten-year-old girl, giggling. It was a beautiful, awesome, living form.' In Tirupati Maharaj saw the Divine Mother in the image of Lord Venkateshwara. His body shivered in ecstasy. Later he said to Swami Sharvananda: 'I have distinctly seen the form of the Divine Mother. Please inquire about it.' After inquiry and close examination of the image and sanctuary, it was found to have been originally a Shakti temple, later converted into a Vishnu temple, probably under the influence of Ramanuja.

In April 1921 Brahmananda went to Madras with Shivananda and inaugurated the Madras Students' Home. Then he spent the summer in Bangalore and returned to Madras in October. Following his suggestion, Durga Puja was performed in the image at the monastery. Swami Ashokananda recalled: 'Once I managed to ask him a certain question very early in the morning.... He told me plainly: "You know I cannot do anything without the command of God." Yes, he was so close to God that we believed, and with good reason, that he was always in contact with Him. I have heard that he often saw God in the form of Sri Ramakrishna and in other forms as well.'

In Madras a dozen nuns from Maharashtra lived in a convent, and Gopala (Baby Krishna) was their Chosen Deity. They heard about Brahmananda and invited him to visit their shrine. Maharaj went there with some monks. When Maharaj sat in a chair, the chief nun placed a silver tray below his

feet. Then each nun washed Maharaj's feet with scented water and wiped them with her hair. His feet were then placed on a velvet cushion and the nuns worshipped him with a garland, flowers, and sandal paste. When the worship was over, each nun carried a small pitcher of milk on her hip and a glass in her hand. Then, encircling Maharaj, they began to dance and sing this famous song of their Saint Namadeva:

Drink this milk, my Lord Gopala,
 Drink this milk, O Son of Nanda,
 This I, Namadeva, bring you
 Milked with my own hands....

Considering Maharaj to be the living Gopala, each nun poured milk into his mouth, but it ran down his chin because he was in samadhi, and they wiped his chin with a handkerchief. When he regained outer consciousness, he asked his attendant to sing a song. Later, hearing about this incident, Saradananda remarked, 'Here the memory of Maharaj's real nature began to awaken.'

(to be continued)

Harmonizing World Views on Consciousness

(Continued from page 734)

all qualities which in principle are open to manipulation or are available for manipulation. Now, if that is what lies behind his view of matter, then the basic reason for the fact that there has been no reconciliation with the other half of our being—mind, is that that half of our being is not controllable. Now, of course; to some extent there is therapy; and of course there are medications: we can have control of it, but basically the autonomous individual and the individual mind, even with brainwashing, evades being controlled. And that is an affront to us because we have banked so much, and continue to bank on discovering things through science that will enable us to control our lives and particularly the future course of history. We have banked so much on that it is an affront to us that there be something that in principle eludes our control. That, I think, goes a certain distance towards explaining the animus behind the Cartesian dichotomy.

As for what the other peoples of the world have to contribute to the future as these two views continue to collide in our world, I will simply indicate one thing: Throughout all of them is the assumption that 'the less proceeds from the more'. There is an original fullness, plenitude, infinitude of all qualities and attributes from which everything else has come down as through a reducing valve at different stages; whereas our modern western view proceeds from the opposite assumption: that 'the more proceeds from the less'.

Now I shall end by saying—and this may be heretical to say on a university campus—I suspect intuitively that the traditionalists are right on this alternative and if we were open to that possibility it might suggest some thoughts with regard to bringing together the virtues of the two views, which now cannot be harmonized. □

Powers of the Mind-II

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

...in the history of mankind, you will find that there come these Messengers, and that from their very birth their mission is found and formed. The whole plan is there, laid down; and you see them swerving not one inch from that. Because they come with a mission, they come with a message, they do not want to reason. Did you ever hear or read of these great Teachers, or Prophets, reasoning out what they taught? No, not one of them did so. They speak direct. Why should they reason? They see the Truth. And not only do they see it but they show it! If you ask me, 'Is there any God?' and I say 'Yes', you immediately ask my grounds for saying so, and poor me has to exercise all his powers to provide you with some reason. If you had come to Christ and said, 'Is there any God?' he would have said, 'Yes'; and if you had asked, 'Is there any proof?' he would have replied, 'Behold the Lord!' And thus, you see, it is a direct perception, and not at all the ratiocination of reason. There is no groping in the dark, but there is the strength of direct vision. I see this table; no amount of reason can take that faith from me. It is a direct perception. Such is their faith—faith in their ideals, faith in their mission, faith in themselves, above all else. The great Shining Ones believe in themselves as nobody else ever does. The people say, 'Do you believe in God? Do you believe in a future life? Do you believe in this doctrine or that dogma?' But here the base is wanting: this belief in oneself. Ay, the man who cannot believe in himself, how can they expect him to believe in anything else? I am not sure of my own existence. One moment I think that I am existing and nothing can destroy me; the next moment I am quaking in fear of death. One minute I think I am immortal; the next minute, a spook appears, and then I don't know what I am, nor where I am. I don't know whether I am living or dead. One moment I think that I am spiritual, that I am moral; and the next moment, a blow comes, and I am thrown flat on my back. And why?—I have lost faith in myself, my moral backbone is broken.

But in these great Teachers you will always find this sign: that

they have intense faith in themselves. Such intense faith is unique, and we cannot understand it. That is why we try to explain away in various ways what these Teachers speak of themselves; and people invent twenty thousand theories to explain what they say about their realisation. We do not think of ourselves in the same way, and, naturally, we cannot understand them.

Then again, when they speak, the world is bound to listen. When they speak, each word is direct; it bursts like a bomb-shell. What is in the word, unless it has the Power behind? What matters it what language you speak, and how you arrange your language? What matters it whether you speak correct grammar or with fine rhetoric? What matters it whether your language is ornamental or not? The question is whether or not you have anything to give. It is a question of giving and taking, and not listening. Have you anything to give?—that is the first question. If you have, then give.

Whatever you do, devote your whole mind, heart, and soul to it. I once met a great sannyasin, who cleansed his brass cooking utensils, making them shine like gold, with as much care and attention as he bestowed on his worship and meditation.

Good and evil thoughts are each a potent power, and they fill the universe. As vibration continues, so thought remains in the form of thought until translated into action. For example, force is latent in the man's arm until he strikes a blow, when he translates it into activity. We are the heirs of good and evil thought. If we make ourselves pure and the instruments of good thoughts, these will enter us. The good soul will not be receptive to evil thoughts.

How to attain purity living this life? Shall we all go to the forest caves? What good would it do? If the mind is not under control, it is no use living in a cave because the same mind will bring all disturbances there. We will find twenty devils in the cave because all the devils are in the mind. If the mind is under control, we can have the cave anywhere, wherever we are.

It is our own mental attitude which makes the world what it is for us. Our thoughts make things beautiful, our thoughts make things ugly. The whole world is in our own minds. Learn to see things in the proper light.

The Sāṅkhya Path to Liberation

A.C. PALIT

In this article Sri Palit of Calcutta presents a study of classical Sankhya as set forth in Īśvarakṛṣṇa's Sāṅkhyakārikā and elucidated in its early commentaries, such as Suvarṇasaptati, Gauḍapādabhāṣya, Yuktidīpikā, Jayamaṅgalā, Maṭharavṛtti and Sāṅkhyatattvakaumudī. Of the many salient points brought out, the one very important to all spiritual aspirants is the bhāva or disposition that is conducive to liberation.

The Sāṅkhya is perhaps the oldest of the six systems of Indian philosophy.^{1,2} There is ample evidence that it is older than Buddhism.³ Winternitz suggests that the eminent Greek philosopher, Pythagoras (ca. 580–500 BC), was influenced by Sankhya.³ According to Swami Vivekananda, every philosophy in the world is indebted to Sankhya.⁴ Even Śaṅkara, the principal exegetist of Vedānta, admits that Sankhya is close (*pratyāsanna*) to Vedānta.⁵ The remarkable feature of Sankhya is that it is *ānvīkṣakī*,⁶ i.e., it seeks to establish the validity of its tenets by logical reasoning, not by falling back on the authority of the Vedas or the Upan-

ishads.

The rudiments of Sankhya, or rather the trends of thought that later developed into Sankhya, are to be found in the hymns of the *Rg-Veda* and the *Atharva-Veda*, and in the early Upanishads, such as the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and the *Chāndogya* (ca. 800–600 BC). The first clear reference to Sankhya ideas are discernible in the middle Upanishads, namely, the *Kaṭha*, the *Śvetāśvatara* (ca. 400–200 BC), and in certain sections of the *Mahābhārata*, namely, the *Mokṣa-dharma*, the *Bhagavad-Gītā* (ca. 200 BC–200) and the *Anugītā*.⁷ The first Sankhya text, or possibly a format for the treatment of the philosophical Sankhya, was the *Śaṣṭitantra*, attributed to either Kapila or Pāṇcaśikha (ca. 100 BC–200). A revision of the *Śaṣṭitantra* was composed by Vārṣaganya (ca. 100–300). Finally, *Īśvarakṛṣṇa* (ca. 300–400) wrote the *Sāṅkhyakārikā*—a normative exposition of what is now designated the classical Sankhya.⁹ The *Sāṅkhyakārikā*

1. T.R.V. Murti, 'Rise of Philosophical Schools', *The Cultural Heritage of India* (Calcutta: Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, 1953), vol. 3, p. 35. [Hereafter *Cultural Heritage*.]

2. Will Durant, 'The Story of Civilization', *Our Oriental Heritage* (New York: Simon Schuster, 1954), part I, p. 536.

3. S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), vol. 2, p. 249.

4. Swami Vivekananda, *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1989), vol. 2, p. 445.

5. *Brahmasūtram Śaṅkarabhāṣyam* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1985), Sūtra 1.4.28.

6. Pulinbihari Chakravarti, *Origin and Development of the Sāṅkhya System of Thought* (New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, 1975), p. 41.

7. Gerald James Larson, *Classical Sāṅkhya* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1979), pp. 71–2. [Hereafter *Classical Sāṅkhya*.]

8. Gerald James Larson and Ram Shankar Bhattacharyya, ed., *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1987), vol. 4, p. 13.

9. *Classical Sāṅkhya*, p. 4.

has been called the pearl of the whole scholastic literature of India.¹⁰ Over the next few centuries, Sankhya deviated somewhat from its original doctrine under the tidal wave of popular opinion in favour of Vedanta; new texts appeared after the fourteenth century showing unmistakable influence of Vedanta. These texts, namely, the *Sāṅkhyasūtra* and two commentaries on it by Aniruddha and Vijñānabhikṣu, do not represent, in their entirety, the classical Sankhya view.¹¹

The classical *Kārikā-Sāṅkhya* is often bracketed with Pātañjali's *Yogasūtra* and labelled *Pātañjala-Sāṅkhya*, having the same metaphysics as Sankhya, but with elaborate praxis. Dasgupta¹² denies any relation between classical Sankhya and Yoga. According to him, some forms of Yoga practice were prevalent in India as early as 3000 BC; later, Patañjali and Vyāsa revised the Yoga methodology to suit Sankhya metaphysics.

This article is based only on the classical Sankhya as set forth in Īśvarakṛṣṇa's *Sāṅkhyakārikā* and elucidated in its early commentaries, such as *Suvarṇasaptati*, *Gauḍapādabhlāṣya*, *Yuktidīpikā*, *Jayamaṅgalā*, *Maṭharavṛtti* and *Sāṅkhya-tattva-kaumudī*.

Sankhya begins with a fundamental inquiry: why are we subject to threefold misery, namely, (a) those which are of physical or mental origin (*ādhyātmika*), (b) those which are caused by other beings (*ādhibhautika*), such as men, beasts, and the like, and (c) those which are due to supernatural causes (*ādhlidaivika*), such as earthquake, lightning, etc. Is there no way of liberating ourselves from misery, completely (*ekāntatas*) and permanently (*atyantatas*)? Finding satisfactory answers to these questions is the primary concern of Sankhya philosophy.

Sankhya posits, and establishes by reasoning, that there are two eternal all-pervasive principles (*tattvas*): (a) *prakṛti* (original material nature), and (b) *puruṣas* (souls or selves), which are infinite in number. The *puruṣas* are conscious but inactive, while the *prakṛti* is unconscious but becomes active in the presence of a *puruṣa*. Thus activated at the beginning of creation (*ādisarga*), the *prakṛti* created a subtle body (*sūkṣmaśarīra*) for each *puruṣa*.^{13,14} And this dyad of a *puruṣa* and a subtle body is an integral part of every living being.

The *puruṣa*, being inactive, is a non-agent (*akartr*)¹⁵, so it is neutral (*udāsīna*), and being neutral, it is a passive witness (*sākṣin*) to the activities of the *prakṛti*. The *puruṣa* is isolated (*kevala*), i.e., permanently free from the three-fold misery¹⁶, and indifferent (*madhyastha*)—like a wandering monk among the tillers in a village¹⁷—but being conscious, it is a spectator (*draṣṭṛ*)¹⁵.

The subtle body is made up of eighteen principles, (a) three internal organs, viz., *buddhi* (intellect), *ahaṁkāra* (ego-sense) and *manas* (mind); (b) ten external organs, viz., five faculties (*indriyas*) of sense perception, such as seeing, hearing, etc., and five faculties of action, such as speaking, grasping, etc.; (c) five subtle elements (*tanmātrās*). It may be noted that the ten external organs are faculties, not gross organs of sense perception and action, such as the eyes, ears, etc., and mouth, hands, etc.; these gross organs are parts of the gross body (*sthūlaśarīra*),

13. *Sāṅkhya Kārikā* with *Maṭharavṛtti* [Hereafter MV] and *Jayamaṅgalā* [Hereafter JM] (Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1994), *Kārikā* 40.

14. *Sāṅkhyatattvakaumudī* [Hereafter STK] (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1989), *Kārikā* 40.

15. JM, 19.

16. STK, 19.

17. *Sāṅkhyakārikā* with *Gauḍapādabhlāṣya* [Hereafter GB] (Varanasi, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1994), 19.

10. Benjamin Walker, *Hindu World* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1968), vol. 2.

11. *Classical Sāṅkhya*, pp. 152–3.

12. Surendranath Dasgupta, Introduction, *Cultural Heritage*, p. 14.

made up of the five gross elements (*bhūtas*).

Thus, there are altogether twenty-five principles: *puruṣas*, *prakṛti*, eighteen principles constituting the subtle body, and five constituting the gross body. The latter twenty-three principles are evolutes of *prakṛti*. Like *prakṛti*, its evolutes are unconscious, but unlike *prakṛti*, they are non-eternal, being produced from another, and mergent (*liṅga*), since they merge into *prakṛti* at the time of the dissolution of the universe.¹⁸

The unconscious internal and external organs carry out their functions mechanically, e.g., thinking, hearing, speaking, etc., and present their perceptions and actions to *buddhi*, the principal organ. The *puruṣa* makes them known (*cetayate*) to *buddhi*.¹⁹ The *buddhi* thus becomes conscious, as it were, of all the functions of the thirteen organs.

Specifically, the functions of the internal organs are as follows:

(a) *buddhi*—ascertainment (*adhyava-sāya*), e.g., 'This is a cow',²⁰ 'This is sound',²¹ etc.;

(b) *ahaṁkāra*—self-awareness (*abhi-māna*), e.g., 'I am good-looking', 'These objects are mine',²² etc.;

(c) *manas*—forming intentions (*saṁkalpa*), e.g., 'I shall go there and take food',²³ etc.

In this way, the *buddhi* experiences things. Experience consists in the feeling of pleasure and pain, and that feeling takes place in the *buddhi*.²⁴ But the *puruṣa*, though essentially free from the three-fold misery,

appropriates to itself—by reason of its proximity (*sannidhāna*)²⁵ to *buddhi*—misery and other properties belonging to *buddhi*.²⁶ This is how we experience misery.

Misery does not ordinarily leave man even after the death of the gross body, because the subtle body containing the *buddhi*, the potential seat of misery, remains intact. Being extremely minute*, the subtle body, accompanied by the *puruṣa*,²⁷ migrates unobstructed even by a solid rock¹⁴, to an incipient gross body belonging to a human or some other being.

What propels the subtle body to a particular form of life? It is the selfsame *buddhi* in one of its eight forms (*rūpa*)²¹, known as *bhāvas* or dispositions. The *bhāvas* not only determine one's future life after death, but one of them (*jñāna*) is the gateway to liberation, as will be seen from the following description of the eight *bhāvas* (of which the first four as listed below are opposite to the other four) and their effects:

(a) *Dharma* or virtue, consisting in abstinences (*yama*) and observances (*niyama*). It causes the subtle body to migrate to the body of a higher form of life, such as to that of a god,²⁸ etc.

(b) *Jñāna* or knowledge of discrimination between *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*.²⁹ The consequence of this *bhāva* is that the subtle body loses its motivation for migrating to another gross body, and vanishes after the death of the existing gross body. In the absence of the subtle body, with its constituent *buddhi*, the *puruṣa* is liberated from the apparent misery which it borrowed from *buddhi*.

18. GB, 10.

19. JM, 36.

20. Sāṅkhya Kārikā with Yuktidīpikā [Hereafter YD] (Varanasi: Krishnadas Academy, 1982), Kārikā 23.

21. JM, 23.

22. JM, 24.

23. *Suvarṇasaptati* [Hereafter SS] (Tirupati: Tirumalai-Tirupati Devasthanams Press, 1944), Kārikā 27.

24. STK, 37.

25. YD, 37.

26. STK, 55.

* Somewhat like the elementary neutrino which can pass unhindered through the earth.

27. Chakravarti, p. 300.

28. JM, 44.

29. GB, 23.

(c) *Vairāgya* or dispassion without the desire for discriminatory knowledge, arising through observing the faults in the objects of senses. It causes the subtle body to be temporarily absorbed into eight-fold *prakṛti*³⁰, i.e., *prakṛti*, *buddhi*, *ahamkāra* and the five subtle elements. (This is not liberation.)

(d) *Aiśvarya* or eight-fold powers, such as the power of becoming as small as an atom (*anīmā*), etc. It causes the subtle body to migrate to the worlds of *Brahmā*, etc., where eight-fold obstacles are removed.³¹ (This is also not liberation.)

(e) *Adharma* or opposite to *dharma*—it causes the subtle body to migrate to the body of a lower form of life, such as that of an animal,²⁸ etc.

(f) *Ajñāna* or lack of discriminatory knowledge; it causes transmigration of the subtle body.

(g) *Avairāgya* or attachment to sacrifice, charity, etc., in the hope of happiness in some higher world³²; it causes transmigration of the subtle body.

(h) *Anaiśvarya* or lack of power; it causes non-attainment of desire objects³² (including non-attainment of liberation).

From the aforesaid enumeration of the *bhāvas* and their effects, we learn that in order to avoid rebirth, neither abstinence and observances (*dharma*), nor dispassion without the urge for discriminatory knowledge, nor the eight-fold powers (*aiśvarya*), is the right *bhāva* or disposition. The opposite *bhāvas*, including the lack of knowledge (*ajñāna*), are also ruled out. The only *bhāva* that is appropriate for liberation from misery (i.e., escaping rebirth) is *jñāna* or knowledge of discrimination between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. Before we describe how this knowledge can arise, it will be worthwhile looking at the *bhāvas* from a different angle—viewing them as *pratyayasarga* or

creations of *buddhi* and reclassifying them as follows:

(a) *Viparyaya* or misconception—in the form of regarding what is inferior (*aśreyas*) as superior (*śreyas*)³³. For instance, one may believe that the dissolution of the subtle body into eight-fold *prakṛti* through dispassion (*vairāgya*) is liberation³⁴, or that the attainment of supernatural powers (*siddhis*) leads to liberation, or that there is nothing superior to the objects of the senses to which even the divine beings are attached, or one may have frustration and indignation for not having attained supernatural powers and objects of senses³⁵, or one may have the fear of losing both at the time of death.

(b) *Aśakti* or inability to gain knowledge³⁶ because of physical or mental defect (*vaikalya*)³³, etc., e.g., not being able to hear one's guru's instructions because of deafness, or to understand them because of dullness of the mind, or to serve him because of a crippled arm or leg³⁷, and so on.

(c) *Tuṣṭi* or self-satisfaction with less (*ūna*) than what is intended to be achieved (*cikīrṣita*)³³. It may be internal or external.

Internal self-satisfaction means being content oneself with: (1) mere knowledge of the existence of *prakṛti*, not its characteristics, such as eternity, unconsciousness, pervasiveness, etc.³⁷; (2) merely a monk's outfit, namely, a rosary of beads and a black antelope's skin, thinking these will give him liberation³⁷; (3) the notion that one attains liberation automatically, in due course of time³⁷; (4) the idea that liberation can be achieved only through a stroke of good luck, and in no other way³⁷.

Self-satisfaction is said to be external

30. JM, 45.

31. MV, 45.

32. SS, 46.

33. YD, 46.

34. SS, 48.

35. MV, 48.

36. JM, 46.

37. MV, 49.

when one remains content with abstinence from objects of enjoyment for various mundane reasons, e.g., (1) trouble in securing them by earning money through employment; (2) trouble in protecting them from thieves, and the like; (3) unquenchability of desire for them; (4) unavoidable injury to living beings while enjoying them³⁸.

(d) *Siddhi* or accomplishment of all (*kṛtsna*) that has to be done to gain the desired end (*yatheṣṭa*)³³, namely, discriminatory knowledge (*jñāna*)³⁹. It includes: (1) rational reflection on the causes of misery and liberation (*ūha*); (2) receiving verbal instruction from someone well-versed in Sāṅkhya (*śabda*); (3) studying the meaning of Sāṅkhya with the help of a teacher (*adhyayana*); (4) associating with a well-disposed friend who can impart the knowledge of the twenty-five principles (*śūlīprāpti*); (5) worshipping a man of knowledge with gifts so that he favours the aspirant with discriminatory knowledge (*dāna*)³⁹.

To sum up, there are four kinds of *pratyayasarga* or creations of *buddhi*, namely, (a) misconception of various kinds about the highest good—often verging on morbidity (*viparyaya*); (b) inability to learn because of physical or mental defect—stymieing even a keen aspirant after knowledge (*aśakti*); (c) self-satisfaction with an assortment of half-baked ideas about liberation and ill-founded abstinence (*tuṣṭi*); (d) accomplish-

ment of all the preliminaries to acquirement of discriminative knowledge (*siddhi*). The *pratyayasarga* thus provides a useful set of guidelines for those who are striving for liberation, and, in this respect, it is complementary to the *bhāvas*. The lesson to be learnt from the four-fold *pratyayasarga* is that one should pursue *siddhi* only and steer clear of the other three, in order to attain the knowledge of discrimination between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*.

How can one intuit this discrimination? The procedure is this:

Having completed *siddhi*, one should meditate repeatedly* on the real nature (*svarūpa*)⁴⁰ of the twenty-five principles (*tattvas*) in this way: 'This is *prakṛti*, this is *puruṣa*, these are the internal and external organs, these are the subtle and gross elements.'⁴¹

Through such repetitive meditation, there arises in the *buddhi* (by virtue of its power of ascertainment) a certain knowledge of discrimination which the *puruṣa*, as is its wont, appropriates to itself: 'I am not the principles (*na asmi*)'; 'The principles are not mine (*na me*)'; 'I am not of the principles (*na aham*)';⁴² This knowledge is complete (*aparīṣeṣa*), pure (*viśuddha*)—being free from doubt (*viparyaya*)⁴², and sole (*kevala*)—there being no other means to liberation.⁴¹

After the attainment of the knowledge of discrimination (*jñāna*), the body of an aspirant continues for some time because of the past impressions (*saṁskāra*) generated by the seven *bhāvas* (*dharma*, *vairāgya*, etc.) in a previous birth⁴³—even as a potter's wheel continues to rotate even after the potter has completed his work. When the past impressions are exhausted, the gross body is destroyed, and the subtle body disappears into *prakṛti*. Thereafter, the *prakṛti* desists from associating with that particular *puruṣa*, and the latter attains to complete isolation (*kaivalya*)—which means cessation (*nigama*) of the three-fold misery.⁴⁴ □

38. MV, 50.

39. JM, 51.

* The method of repeated meditation is also prescribed in the Vedānta as a means of attaining the knowledge of the Self (*Brahmasūtra* with *Śaṅkarabhāṣya*, Sūtras 4.1.1–2).

40. JM, 64.

41. MV, 64.

42. MV, 64.

43. JM, 67.

44. STK, 68.

In This World...

TANUSREE GHOSH*

So many things come and go,
In this crossword puzzle of the world.
Small hints, give rise to the rest,
As words merge and fade.
The Lord's all, all He made,
We have come just to continue,
And give way to all that's new.
A tiny speck in the sky,
Yet important and wanted,
Till the end, to merge again. □

Omnipresent

TANUSREE GHOSH*

I will break all ties,
to spread everywhere.
I shall stop this heart beat,
to beat in all hearts.
I shall destroy all dams,
to mix with the ocean.
I shall penetrate all roofs,
to merge in the sky.
But I shall vaporize myself,
only to come again as rain.
I want to be here and also there,
so I shall come and go,
till I mix everywhere.
The I shall be in you, and the I shall be in me
But I shall also be in 'we'.
I will keep no gaps, but fill all,
There shall be no petals
But only flowers. □

* The author of both the poems is a student of Class XII from Calcutta.

Where Buddhist Advaita Joins Hands with Adi-Shankara

ANTHONY ELENJIMITTAM

Rev. Anthony Elenjittam of Bombay lays stress on the need for humankind to combine, in the language of Swami Vivekananda, 'the brain of Vedanta with the heart of Buddha' in a world which, even as it enters the third millennium, is sitting on the edge of a volcano. There is no quarrel, says the author, between Vedanta and the message of Buddha, both of which accept 'the One, the Unborn, the Unconditioned, the Unrelated'.

Our planet earth should enter the third millennium with the children of mother earth having learnt the wisdom and ability to live by the light of *Advaita*, non-duality. Advaita Vedanta is the only philosophy of life that can give meaning to our earthly existence, generate self-realized dynamics within us and bestow that mental illumination which alone can save us from the deluge that threatens to engulf and overwhelm our planet earth and its inhabitants. The *Kali Yuga* need not mean a 'deluge over us' as in the time of Noah, nor should this cycle end up with the total destruction of humankind thanks to the nuclear stockpile of bombs and missiles in many countries that hang over us as the sword of Damocles and can bring on a global disaster if the light of reason, intelligent logic, and compassion to all the sentient beings does not become the norm of life in our power-politics, global economics and globalized standardization of life.

Our great prophet Swami Vivekananda had already foreseen and had already taught us to combine the brain of Vedanta with the heart of Buddha, that compassion which is the main characteristic of both the Therāvāda and Mahāyāna branches of the gospel of Buddha. As one studies with heart and love the *Vivekacūdāmaṇi* of Shankara on the one side, and the *Śuraṅgama-sūtra* of Buddha on the other, one

can discover that the teaching of Adi-Shankara (original Shankara) and Lord Buddha, though different in their philosophical semantics and logic, are from the point of view of the practical devotion, substantially the same. In fact, from the *vyavahārika* (actual) standpoint of the religious aspirant, earnestly pursuing the path of devotion to Truth, the scholars and students, both Western and Eastern, who describe Shankara as 'a hidden Buddhist', and Buddha's philosophy as 'Shankara-Vedanta' may not be said to be wrong. When all competition and politics of religion are set aside, there is no real quarrel between them. The great Teachers themselves would never have quarrelled with each other; but after extraneous things found their way into the pure religion, the struggle for supremacy had to begin and as we know, the force of Shankara's argument prevailed in India.

To make a long story short, Shankara's Advaita can be condensed in these words: *brahma satyam jagannithyā jīvo brahmaiva nāparaḥ*—'Brahman is Truth; the world is unreal. The individual self is non-different from Brahman.' The individual self in its ontological essence is Brahman, that ultimate Reality, identical with It. The non-dualist position is explained with great beauty, logic, and irrefutable argument in Shankaracharya's *Vivekacūdāmaṇi*, an aspi-

rant's textbook written for all spiritual aspirants of all countries and of all times.

Going through the Buddhist classics like the *Viśuddhi Mārga*, the *Majjima Nikaya*, the *Abhidhamma-piṭaka*, the *Mahā-parinirvāṇa-sūtra*, the *Dhammapada*, and other texts, one can condense the also non-dualistic doctrine of Buddhism in these words:

Ālaya-vijñāna, the unconditioned Consciousness (of the Yogāchāra school of Mahāyāna) is the Absolute, the Real (positive), the Unborn and the Eternal. The ever-changing evolving and involving universe is a mental fiction with its fevers of egoism and all the consequent miseries and sufferings therefrom. Realize that Reality.

In the *Udāna*, Buddha teaches his bhikhus saying: '*Atti bhikshave ekam ajātam abhūtam asaṅgatham*, There is, O Bhikhus, the One (without a second), the Unborn, the Unconditioned, the Unrelated.' Buddha refers to that unitary Consciousness of Pure Being (capitals denote it is a positive) beyond all becoming, where alone egoistic desires and lust and sufferings are extinguished in nirvāṇic bliss, ineffable, indescribable, *anirvacanīya*, as the Upanishads describe It. Buddha, the Child of Mother India, nay, the greatest son in the history of humankind, pointed towards the same Self-realization which Adi-Shankara thirteen centuries later taught with rigorous logic. In Shankara the intellectual side predominates, in his metaphysics and ontology, while in Buddha the same non-duality or Advaita experience pointed towards strengthening compassion (*maitrī*, *anukampā*) and fellow-feeling towards all living beings.

We the ignorant are deceived by the phenomenal mind with its egoistic desires and interests, whereas when enlightenment dawns in the non-dualistic unitary con-

sciousness of the 'One-without-a-second', the entire relative world disappears and the Self-realized sage says: '*so'ham*, I am That'; and '*tat tvam asi*, That thou art.'

As *avidyā* or spiritual ignorance is the root cause of all our ills and miseries, we are all called upon to uproot this poisonous weed from the minds and hearts of human beings. In order to achieve this goal of spiritual education and Self-realization we need study, silence, meditation and the entire monastic discipline. It is for this reason that the Indo-Āryan tradition starts off the human pilgrimage on this earth with *brahmacarya*, which is the period when the celibate student, boy or girl, prepares himself/herself to shoulder the responsibilities of life in society and also attain Self-realization. The codes of Manu, Hammurabi, Moses, and the other prophets of ancient civilizations have insisted on purity of life—in thought, word and deed—in order to understand the basic ethics and moral values in the absence of which no human civilization can stand for long. Lycurgus, the ancient legislator of Sparta, enforced rigorous physical discipline to prepare the students both mentally and physically to endure all the difficulties that come in the pursuit of life's higher goals.

The inner core and kernel of the Buddhist teaching is pure non-duality of the Real, which is unbounded, unrelated, unborn and unconditioned Consciousness. It is around this quintessence that the entire historical growth of Buddhism is based, from the purest sublime Himalayan heights of ineffable Consciousness to the popular religion manifested in rosaries and prayer wheels, and in the lamaistic ceremonial religions in Buddhist countries. But it is this scientific and psychological aspect of Buddhism that is today spreading to the West after the teaching of Buddha was restricted for centuries mostly to the Asian countries and peoples. The Tibetan diaspora with

Dalai Lama and his entourage exiled in India and the teaching mission of lamas to aspirants and students of this tiny planet have all contributed to the revaluation and restoration of the Buddhist Advaita. The *Prajñāpāramita-sūtra* of the Buddha and the *Nirvāṇa Śaṭkam* of Shankaracharya both point to the same non-dual ontology as experienced in the life of those who composed them. Says Buddha:

*Om, nirvikalpe namastubhyam
prajñāpāramite amite;
Yā tvam sarvānavadhyāṅgi
niravadyairnirīkṣyase.*

Salutations and prostrations to Thee, O Wisdom-Consciousness, unconditioned and boundless. Purity Thou art, devoid of all defects, hence only the pure in heart, the blameless, the perfect, will be enabled to realize Thee.

Jesus echoed the same truth in his famous aphorism: 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' Shankara, dis-identifying himself from the phenomenal universe of names and forms, says in the opening verse in the *Nirvāṇa Śaṭkam*:

*Manobuddhyahaikāra cittāni nāham
Na ca śrotrajihve na ca ghrāṇanetre;
Na ca vyoma bhūmirna tejo na vāyuh
Cidānandarūpaḥ Śivo'ham Śivo'ham.*

Mind, intellect, egoism, thoughts, I am not; nor am I the one who hears, tastes, smells or sees; nor am I the space or earth or fire, nor the atmospheric air. I am pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss; I am Śiva, I am Śiva,

indeed.

In the great Buddhist universities like Vikramshila, Nalanda, and other monastic centres, as revealed also in the Kanheri Caves, and the Ajanta and Ellora Caves, the innermost core around which the entire range of Buddhist philosophy, theology and religion revolved was pure Advaita, that Reality of realities which is conceived as Pure Being, beyond all becoming, Consciousness unrestricted by name and form which, for that very fact, is also the essence of bliss, beatitude, and the highest spiritual perfection. That philosophical core of Buddhism that was taken to China by Fahien, to Tibet by Padmasambhava, to the Chinese emperor and people by Bodhidharma, the Father of Zen meditation—all had their pivot in Advaita. While Nagarjuna, Dharmakirti, Asvaghosa and others dwelt at such Himalayan altitude of Advaita, people embraced this great concept of non-dualistic religion in their own way, often coming down to the degenerated forms of idol-worship, priestly ceremonial and devotional outbursts, as it happened in India where Hinduism too evolved various forms around the sacred lore of the Upanishads. The wars of religion between the Jews and the Arabs, the Sunnis and the Shias, the Catholics and the Protestants, and so on, can end only with the Gospel of Advaita which proclaims aloud with realization and experience 'The One-without-a-second is the Reality, the many of the phenomenal universe is appearance only, Atman-Brahman-Consciousness is the Substance; everything else is mere shadow cast by the changeful minds.' □

Through the power of *Ojas* the knowledge of Brahman unfolds itself. The knowledge already exists, we have only to unfold it. If you can maintain your chastity for twelve years, the mind gets steady, with the result that the knowledge unfolds itself.

—*Spiritual Talks by the first disciples of Sri Ramakrishna*, pp. 192–3.

Reviews and Notices

ADVAITA—A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS;
Prof. A. Ramamurty; publ. D.K.
Printworld (P) Ltd, 'Sri Kunj', F-52 Bali
Nagar, New Delhi 110 015; 1996;
pp. 256+xii; Rs. 275/-.

The book, under review, has been published as No. 5 of the *Contemporary Researches in Hindu Philosophy & Religion* series of the publisher. It has come from the pen of a well-known student of Advaita Vedanta. An attempt has been made in this work to analyse philosophically some of the advaitic concepts of perennial interest. A philosophical analysis has been done of the major concepts of Advaitism, namely, Atman, Brahman, and the world, with a view to comprehending the meaning of *advaita*, a concept central to Śaṅkara's philosophy.

The author deals with the concept of *advaita* at length. For him *advaita* means the absolute oneness of all or the absence of difference. But, since *advaita* is *acintya*, it cannot be defined. It is so because it is not an empirical truth. Advaitism does not establish identity either between the Self and Brahman or between the world and Brahman. The meaning of *advaita*, here, has been understood in three ways which complement each other. The Upaniṣads assert all the three forms. They are:

(i) Brahman is the reality of all that is, and it is one without a second (*ekamevādvitīyam*). The Mahāvākyas clearly testify this. Though ontologically Brahman is the same as the Atman, epistemologically Atman is the direct source of Brahman's knowledge. This Atman or the Self is identified with Consciousness. Its pure form is revealed during the *Fourth* (*turiya*) state and that is the evidence to know its non-dual nature. It is the state of desirelessness or *Ānanda*. It is the end of all knowledge—Vedanta (cf. *Br. Up.*, II.3.vi). *Advaita* in the context means the oneness of the reality that is empirically experienced (in the earlier three states, namely, waking, dream and deep sleep) and the one known during *turiya* or as *turiya*.

(ii) The Upaniṣads also assert the non-difference between Brahman and the all (*sarvam khalu idam Brahma*). Sankara states that the differences

are due to name and form only. Duality is basically due to *māyā*. When the differences created by *avidyā* are destroyed, the universe remains, one without a second (*bhedabhāve praṇāśite idam eva advitīyam* (Śaṅkara on *Br. Up.*, II.4.xii). In reality the world of empirical experience is never different from Brahman. The problem of identity between the world and Brahman is meaningful only at the conceptual level, and not at the level of direct realization.

(iii) *Advaita* is the negation of all duality (*neti, neti*). Duality is the basis of man's empirical or secular life. It is also the basis of man's spiritual and religious life. But *advaita* is beyond all that is empirically intelligible and meaningful (*sarva vyavahāra rahita*). It is the end of worldly life of man (*prapañcopaśama*). It is the end of all values (cf. Śaṅkara on *Māṇḍ. Up.*, 3.7; *Taitt. Up.*, II.5.i).

Advaita, as per the author of the book under reference, is basically a matter of direct realization, not a matter of understanding. It is not a metaphysical or a philosophical position. The object of *advaita* as a philosophy is to clear wrong knowledge. It is mainly a critique of *dvaita*. The differences have instrumental values (*upāya*) to teach *advaita*. The Upaniṣads try to describe it in language. But the descriptions are not literal, they are suggestive (*lakṣaṇa*). *Advaita* is freedom from all concepts or views which involve duality or differences (*dvaita prapañcopaśame... advaita bhāvaḥ*; cf. Śaṅkara's Introduction to *Māṇḍ. Up.*). The main object of Advaita Vedanta and of Śaṅkara is to remove wrong knowledge of Brahman and not to reveal Brahman. *Advaita* is basically a matter of direct realization.

When the author states that *advaita* is not a metaphysical or a philosophical position, he appears to have ignored the phenomenal movement of Advaitism from the time of Śaṅkara till date. How and why Advaitism becomes a living reality for the numerous adherents and takes the form of a dominant *saṃpradāya* has not been explained by him.

The work, nevertheless, is an important and outstanding contribution to the study of *Advaita* and a landmark in contemporary researches in Hindu Philosophy.

Prof. S.P. Dubey, Jabalpur

ŚRĪ TATTVA SANDARBHA (OF JĪVA GOSVĀMĪ); *tr. and Comm. by Sri Satya Narayana Dasa & Kundali Dasa; publ. Jiva Institute for Vaiṣṇava Studies, Sri Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Mandir, Ramanā Reti, Vrindavan, Mathura Dt., UP 281 124; 1995; pp. 424+xxviii; Rs. 495/-.*

Śrī Tattva-Sandarbha is the first of the six treatises on the *Bhāgavatam* of Vyāsadeva by Sri Jīva Gosvāmī (1511–1596 AD) known as the *Bhāgavata Sandarbha* (also known as *Ṣaṭ-Sandarbha*). These six treatises, on their part, are systematic analyses of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* which is the last and perhaps the best work of Vyāsadeva, as it is the result of a transcendental experience of the author at the instance of Sage Nārada. Not satisfied with the writings of the Purāṇas, the epics and the *Brahmasūtras*, Vyāsa approached Nārada and was advised to produce a poem on *Prema* (Love of God). Vyāsa, in his *samādhi* (trance) found that devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa (the Absolute Reality) will mitigate material miseries. Even Ātmārāmas, like Śukadeva, were attracted to this nature of the Lord (*paramapremarūpa*).

The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition holds that there are practical difficulties in understanding the Vedas. The *Purāṇas*, which are as good as the Vedas and are known as the *Fifth Veda*, should be studied for knowing the Truth. Among the *Purāṇas*, however, only the *Sāttvika Purāṇas* give us clear understanding of the Absolute. Amongst the *Sāttvika Purāṇas*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the best and the most important. It is supposed to be the essence of the Vedas because it is based on the *Gāyatrī mantra*. It is also a natural commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtras*. It is an excellent philosophical work, distinct from most of the philosophical works in the sense that it denounces the concept of liberation, nay, the desire for liberation even. Instead, it espouses Love of Kṛṣṇa and underlines Vyāsa's statement that Kṛṣṇa is verily the Lord Himself (*Kṛṣṇastu Bhagavān svayam*).

It is said that without studying the six treatises of Jīva Gosvāmī one cannot understand the true message of *Bhāgavatam*. They are like serving a six-course meal for a complete intellectual satisfaction and nourishment of the reader. False or immature devotees, having inadequate knowledge of the conclusions of scriptures, fail to

achieve pure devotion. The treatises provide right direction to them. The six treatises deal with truth, God, the Absolute, Kṛṣṇa, devotion and love respectively. They summarize the *acintya-bhedābheda* philosophy, a term first used by Jīva Gosvāmī for the school of Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. The first of the treatises, the book under review, lays the foundation for the author's presentation of the other treatises by establishing Vaiṣṇava epistemology or theory of knowledge. Here Jīva Gosvāmī proves that for knowing the Absolute Truth which is beyond perception and mental speculations, Vedas (scriptural testimony) are the supreme *pramāṇa*. Jīva Gosvāmī emphasizes on the heart of the author of *Bhāgavatam* and establishes the validity of testimony in the light of the two notable speakers of *Sātvata-Saṁhitā* (the *Bhāgavatam*), namely, Śuka and Sūta.

In course of his present work of sixty-three *anucchedas* (sections), Jīva Gosvāmī expounds the *acintya-bhedābheda* of Caitanya who had initially propounded his philosophy in eight verses only. He first deals with epistemology (*pramāṇas*) in twenty sections and with objects of knowing (*prameyas*) in thirty-five sections. The first eight sections are, of course, invocatory. During this venture the author refutes the *nirguṇatva* (impersonalism) and appearance theories of Śāṅkara with logic and scriptural references. He also refutes the Buddhist theory of momentariness. For him Caitanya Mahāprabhu is Lord Kṛṣṇa incarnate. The monistic statements of the scripture need correct interpretation. The sentences like '*Tattvamasi*' reveal that the oneness of the Supreme with the *jīva* consists in the latter's being purely spiritual and as a particle of the Supreme. The doctrines of *pariccheda* and *pratibimba* also must be understood in a secondary sense. They express some sort of similarity between the Supreme and the world. Buddhism, he maintains, is not tenable as it is not based on *Śabda pramāṇa*. Its theory of momentary consciousness (*kṣaṇika vijñāna*) is also untenable. The material conception of changing consciousness is defective. There is absolute pure consciousness and it is one with the individual souls. The objective world exists as a part of this consciousness. It may be noted here that Jīva Gosvāmī admits only three valid means of knowledge (*pramāṇas*), namely, Perception, Inference and Testimony. The other *pramāṇas* are included in them. Comparison, Presumption, Inclusion and Gesture from part of Inference; Ab-

sence is a kind of Perception; and Authoritative Statements and Tradition are kinds of Word.

Jīva Gosvāmī discusses the traditional ten topics of the *Bhāgavatam* in the *Tattva Sandarbha*, and shows that there is harmony between the teachings of Śukadeva and Sūta. He also underlines the fact that the real purpose of the *Bhāgavatam* is to explain the nature of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The ten topics discussed are: (i) *Sarga* or Primary Creation, (ii) *Visarga* or Secondary Creation, (iii) *Sthāna* or maintenance, (iv) *Posaṇa* or mercy, (v) *Ūti* or desire, (vi) *Manvantara* or the reign of Manu, (vii) *Īśānukathā* or pastimes of the Lord, (viii) *Nirodha* or annihilation, (ix) *Mukti* or liberation, (x) *Āśraya* or ultimate shelter.

It is interesting to note that Baladeva Vidya-bhushana, initially a Dvaita-vadin, and subsequently a great scholar of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, wrote a brief but full commentary on the first treatise only. This shows the importance of the *Tattva Sandarbha*. Radhamohan Gosvami, earlier an Advaitin, wrote an exhaustive commentary on the text. The present publication is the first English translation and commentary of the text by an insider. The volume provides the Sanskrit text in Devanagari script, English transliteration in Roman script, a running English translation of the text (as word-to-word translations present several difficulties and a literal translation is an impossibility) and an exhaustive English commentary (known as *Jīva Toṣaṇī*) by Sri Satya Narayana Dasa in association with Kundali Dasa. This *Jīva Toṣaṇī* commentary is based on the exposition of the *Sandarbhias* by Haridas Sastri Maharaja under whose tutelage the first commentator studied the text for about two years. The publication is in tune with the global mission of Krishna Consciousness movement so vigorously piloted by HH Bhakti Vedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda.

Appendix II deals with the controversy of interpolation in the *Bhāgavatam* text. Vallabha and some others hold that chapters 12, 13 and 14 of Canto X of the text are interpolated. But the Gauḍīya ācāryas (and especially Giridharalal Gosvami) treat them to be authentic. These chapters, they maintain, comment on Vyāsa's statement—*Kṛṣṇastu Bhagavān svayam*—totalling 335 chapters containing 18,000 verses as is confirmed by the *Bhāgavata Māhātmya* of *Gaurī Tantra*, II.26. To say that some of the former and latter statements do not match, or there are repetitions in

these chapters, or some of the ācāryas like Madhva have not commented on these chapters cannot conclusively prove the premise of interpolation.

The volume is a very important addition to the study of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. It will help readers around the world to understand the epistemology and ontology of *acintya-bhedābheda* most authentically and in lucid terms.

Prof. S.P. Dubey

THE RĀMĀYAṆA OF VĀLMĪKI—AN APPRAISAL; *Swami Harshananda*; publ. *Ramakrishna Math, Bull Temple Road, Bangalore 560 019*; 1996; pp. 60+iv; Rs. 12/-.

The *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki has profoundly influenced the life, thought and culture of not only millions of Hindus over the millennia but the culture of the country as a whole. All the aspects of our culture have been under its tangible effects. The text of the epic has become the source of a large number of literary productions in almost all the languages of this country.

The popularity of the epic-story is mainly due to the reason that the hero of the narrations had taken part in all the socio-cultural dimensions of the sub-continent. Whether Rama was a historical figure or not is hardly an important point today. He and his associates are now an integral part of our living culture and will remain so in centuries to come. The author of the epic is also a pre-historical figure. Some modern scholars trace the composition of the text of the epic by Vālmīki to the period around BC 4400. The actual text has 24,253 *ślokas* (verses) categorized into seven books. Three recensions of the epic are available today, namely, the Southern, the Northern and the Bengali one. There are a number of well-known commentaries on the text and most of them are found in print.

The *Rāmāyaṇa* is the *Ādi Kāvya* (Primeval Classic) of the literary tradition of India. It relates stories of Rama and his associates using similes and metaphors. It depicts Rama as Dharma personified. Dharma is the key-note of the poem. Dharma supports the universe. It expresses itself as conscience within and duty without. Vālmīki presents Rama as the representative of both these virtues. He also presents Rama as intensely hu-

man. To the people of his kingdom Rama is like a father and a mother rolled into one.

The epic mirrors the culture and civilization of the nation in a holistic manner. It presents three typical and distinct cultures, namely, the one of Ayodhyā under Dashāratha and Rama, the other of Lanka under Rāvaṇa and the third of Kishkindhā under Vāli and Sugrīva. Rama saves both these non-Ayodhyan cultures and makes them more human.

The author of the book under review presents the story of *Rāmāyaṇa* in brief and describes seventeen characters of the epic. He rightly concludes with the note that the *Rāmāyaṇa* has stood the test of time. It stands out as unique. It has influenced our culture immensely and continues to do so even today. Its impact on all walks of the people of our country is palpable. It has placed before us a treasure of ideas and ideals to constantly inspire us, and to raise us beyond selfishness, to be truly human and to aspire for divine heights.

Prof. S.P. Dubey

PURUSHOTTAMA YOGA; V. Madhusudan Reddy; publ. Institute of Human Studies, 2-2-4/1 University Road, Hyderabad 500 044; First Edn. 1996; pp. 190+xi; Rs. 100/-.

The book is a collection of ten talks delivered by Shri Reddy in Auomira Centre of London, during July 1993—the centenary year of the departure of Aurobindo from England. The theme of the talk is 'Life Divine'. Aurobindo's *Life Divine* is a comprehensive work which answers 'scientist's doubts' as well as abstract and abstruse requirements of 'philosopher's quests'. Shri Reddy is an ardent disciple of Aurobindo and in these talks he elucidates latter's philosophy to the then London audience.

The title, 'Purushottama Yoga', is significant in that the speaker believes that certain messages are delivered to humanity when the Supreme Being incarnates on this earth. He says, 'in His individual aspect, the *Avatār* is a special manifestation of the Purushottama, who not only strives to promote the integral well-being of the race, Lokasamgraha, but also struggles and suffers as an ordinary individual to make available to the mortal, the immortal facilities of the spirit' (Ascr.

p. x). Earlier, he says that it is rather to save humanity and salvage the earth, bringing down new power and new light, that the Divine incarnates here. He regards this as the conscious descent of the Infinite and the Eternal into the seeming finiteness of appellative configuration of *nāma-rūpa*.

Aurobindo, even as Swami Vivekananda, placed before humanity the ideal, not so much of individual *moksha*, but of universal upliftment. The speaker slowly takes us with him to the region of supramental light and force. He encourages us to cultivate an attitude of utter humility and surrender that would help us in understanding Aurobindo's Integral Yoga.

The second chapter on 'Matter-based Manifestation' explains how both 'spirit' and 'matter' are modes of Reality and how different modes, though apparently contradictory, are essentially one and the same.

The three aspects of the Divine—Individual, Universal and Transcendental—, have been explained in the chapter 'Supreme Reality'. Here, a subtle distinction between the philosophy of Ācārya Śaṅkara and Aurobindo is made more clear. This and the subsequent chapter, 'The March of Vedanta' go a long way in clearing natural conflicts which usually arise in the minds of *sadhakas* (aspirants).

In the philosophy of Aurobindo there is a special place for human evolution and the development of Super Mind. The speaker has lucidly presented Aurobindo in this regard in the chapters on 'Man: An Evolutionary Phenomenon' and 'Journey to the Super Mind'.

When the reader comes towards the end of the book, he feels that he is not lost in a dense forest of philosophy, but, on the other hand, he is able to distinguish and identify the varied flora of this garden.

It is good that these lectures are printed in a book form for a wider audience. It is a pleasure to go through these pages as the lines in print become almost audible and make a sharp impression on ardent readers. The printing and the get up of the book are attractive.

Dr. N.B. Patil
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News and Reports

Celebration of the Centenary of The Ramakrishna Mission and

Swami Vivekananda's Return to India

Vivekananda visited Andhra Pradesh in 1893 before his going to the West. However, on his return to India in 1897 as the hero of the World's Parliament of Religions, Swamiji did not touch Andhra Pradesh. The people of Andhra Pradesh, needless to say, eagerly looked forward to it. A hundred years later, the earnest desire of the people of Andhra Pradesh found expression when they took out a chariot carrying Swamiji's image during 1 to 13 May (first phase) and 22 to 30 (second phase) throughout coastal Andhra Pradesh. This tour was organized by Swami Swatmanandaji, head of the **Ramakrishna Math at Rajahmundry**. There were receptions with Vedic chanting, bhajan, meetings, etc. The route

followed is given in Table I. A **Floral Tribute of Welcome** was presented to Swamiji and the scroll was handed over to Swami Tattwabodhanandaji, a Trustee of the Ramakrishna Order and head of the Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama at Visakhapatnam. (See September issue, p. 620).

As a part of this programme, the **Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama at Visakhapatnam** celebrated the centenary of the Ramakrishna Mission and Swamiji's Return to India from the West on 25 and 26 May. On the 25th, the chariot was received at a college from where devotees, students and local people came to the Ashrama in a procession. Public meetings were addressed by Srimat Swami Ranganathanandaji Maharaj and other eminent speakers.

Table I *Route followed by the chariot carrying Swami Vivekananda's image
through coastal Andhra Pradesh*

<i>May 1997</i>	<i>From</i>	<i>Through</i>	<i>To</i>
1	Chittore	Pakala	Tirupati
2	Tirupati	Kalahasti-Naidupeda-Gudur	Nellore
3	Nellore	Kavali-Singarayakonda-Kandukuru	Kanigiri
4	Kanigiri	Podili-Medarametla	Darsi
5	Darsi	Vinukonda	Rentachintala
6	Rentachintala		Guntur
7	Guntur		Vijayawada
8	Vijayawada		Nuziveedu
9	Nuziveedu		Eluru
10	Eluru	Tadepalligudem and several villages	Bhimavaram
11	Bhimavaram	Narasapuram-Maruteru & other villages	Tanuku
12	Tanuku	Ravulapalem	Amalapuram
13	Amalapuram	Ravulapalem-Vemagiri-Dowlesvaram	Rajahmundry
22	Rajahmundry	Anaparthi-Ramachandra Puram	Kakinada
23	Kakinada		Vetlapalem
24	Vetlapalem		Pratipadu
25	Pratipadu		Visakhapatnam
27	Visakhapatnam	Bhogapuram-Pidi Bhimavaram	Srikakulam
28	Srikakulam	Amudalavalasa-Kotabommali	Tekkali
29	Tekkali	Several villages, Palasa	Sompeta
30	Sompeta	Madhurapuram-Sriramapuram	Ichhapuram

From Ichhapuram the chariot proceeded to Andhra Pradesh-Orissa border and returned via Radhapur and Kaviti to Jagati where the yatra was concluded with a public meeting